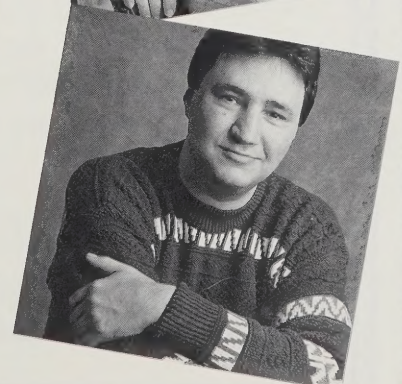
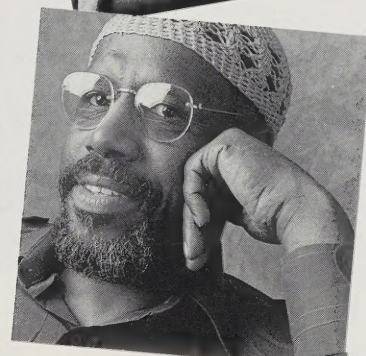
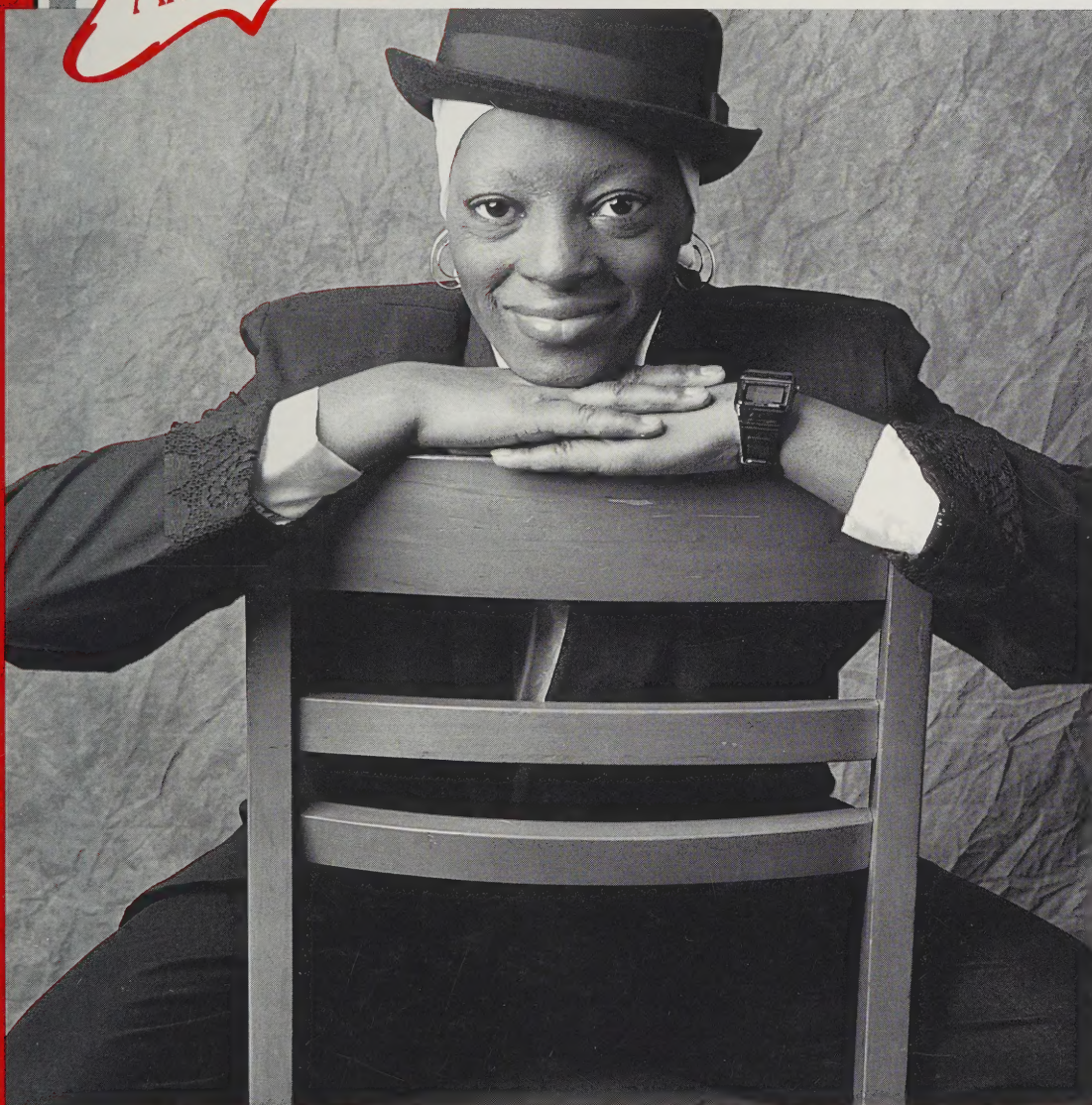


Winter 1994

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## *Quarterly*

20th  
Anniversary



*Photography*  
AND  
*a Life Sentence*



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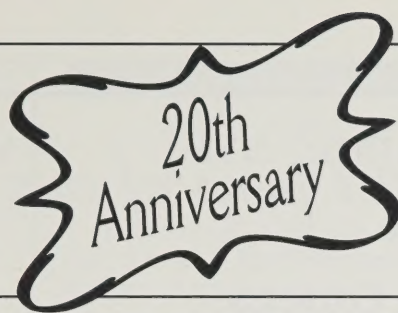
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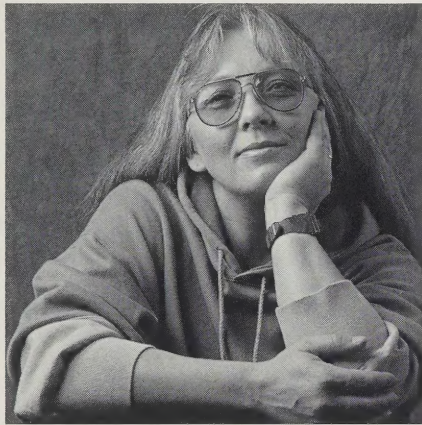
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# FESTIVAL

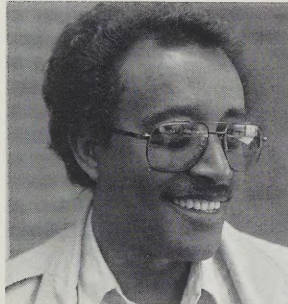
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on the cover . . .

Selections from  
Howard Zehr's photographs of  
prisoners with life sentences,  
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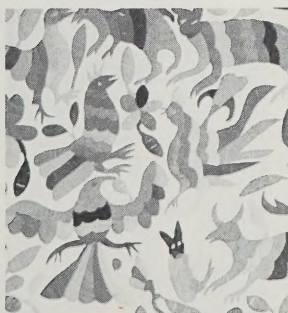
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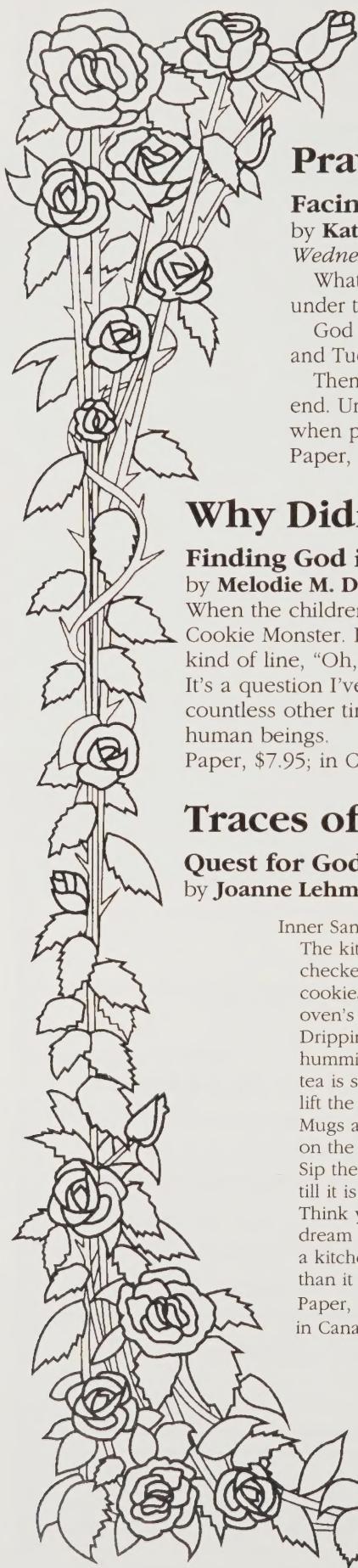
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*From the pens of our sisters . . .*

## **Prayers of an Omega:**

### **Facing the Transitions of Aging**

by **Katie Funk Wiebe**

*Wednesday is Humpday*

What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again, there is nothing new under the sun. (Eccles. 1:9)

God of all eternity, I didn't need to look at the calendar to tell me it is Humpday. Monday and Tuesday move by on snail's feet. Usually there's little or no mail. People don't call.

Then comes Wednesday. It's like the hump on a camel. Crawl over it and you slide off the end. Until Wednesday comes I'm climbing toward the hump, waiting for the weekend, for when people have time to call, and for going to church and maybe going out to eat.

Paper, \$6.95; in Canada \$9.60.

## **Why Didn't I Just Raise Radishes?**

### **Finding God in the Everyday**

by **Melodie M. Davis**

When the children were small, they enjoyed a wonderful Sesame Street book featuring the tireless Cookie Monster. In it Cookie Monster frustrates a character who finally exclaims, in a nonsense kind of line, "Oh, why didn't I just raise radishes?"

It's a question I've asked myself many times when frustrated with parenting. However, there are countless other times I rejoice that I'm not just raising radishes, but wonderful, God-created little human beings.

Paper, \$7.95; in Canada \$10.95.

## **Traces of Treasure:**

### **Quest for God in the Commonplace**

by **Joanne Lehman**

Inner Sanctum:

The kitchen table  
checkered cloth  
cookies baked  
oven's off.

Dripping faucet  
humming fridge  
tea is steeping  
lift the lid.

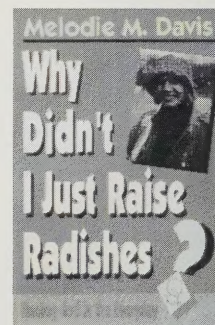
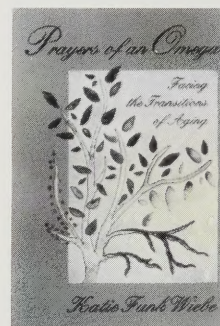
Mugs are hanging  
on the wall.

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till it is all.

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dream your dreams  
a kitchen's more  
than it sometimes seems.

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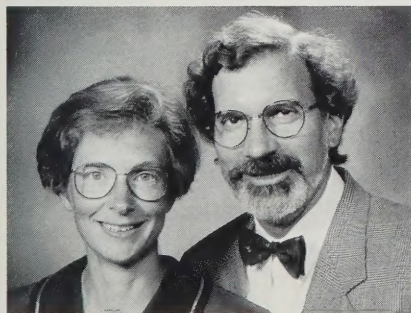
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Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good

## EDITORIAL

# Are Sociologists Equipped?

How should we in the church chart our future? Most Mennonites would suggest discernment by spiritual leaders who are in touch with the people. This involves prayer, Bible study, a sense of history, and a creative view of the future.

Lately, in North American circles, there appears to be an increasing reliance on sociologists to conduct “studies” to help us see where we’re headed. But this approach may not be as objective and helpful as is commonly assumed. Recent experience suggests that the tools sociologists use may be largely subjective and vulnerable to manipulation.

Perhaps it would be helpful to ask ourselves a few questions about these studies by sociologists:

1. Who is sponsoring the study? Do they have any vested interest in its outcome? (To use a vivid example from the larger world, why is it that “studies” by the tobacco companies can never seem to find a link to cancer?)

2. Are the sociologists who are chosen to conduct the study sympathetic to the premise?

3. What is the selection process for choosing the individuals who are to be studied? Many subtle prejudices affect the “scholars” at this point.

4. Which persons or groups (or congregations) choose not to participate? Does the sponsor’s address or image influence certain groups to drop out? Many times this only skews the numbers in favor of the premise. (If the study is testing attitudes toward Mennonite colleges, for instance, persons who don’t support Mennonite colleges may choose not to participate in the study; this has the effect of making the numbers from the study look more favorable toward the colleges. But is the conclusion from the study then reliable?)

5. To organize the study, the sociologists need to create categories of attitudes to test. Another highly subjective situation. The results of the study are heavily influenced by the selections of these categories. But the charts and tables make it all look very objective!

6. Most subjective of all are the questions. The prejudices of the sociologists and the vested interests of the

premise both influence the choice of questions, the vocabulary, the tone, and the nuance. The use of one word instead of another can throw the results dramatically.

7. The final imperialism in this process presents itself with the orchestration of the interpretation. Without a smile or a wink, these sociologists present their conclusions as though they are objective and beyond dispute. But the interpretation of data is at best a smorgasbord process. Pick this response and contrast it with that answer, and we have verification of the premise of the sponsors!

Sadly, some Mennonite leaders act as though sociological studies are more objective than the Bible itself.

Does this mean sociologists have no role to play in the church? Of course not. But certainly it seems unfair to both the sociologists among us and to the church itself to grant so much authority to their work. Perhaps their contribution to charting our future should be equated to that of the psychologists, farmers, artists, parents, and business persons among us.

Two recent examples suggest that sociologists may not be as equipped to help us find the truth about ourselves as is often assumed:

1. There has been a strong push from certain sponsors during the past decade to merge (“integrate”) the Mennonite Church with the General Conference Mennonite Church. An analysis of the language employed, the groups not included, the vested interests, and the less-than-candid tactics involved could fill a book.

The latest chapter unfolded during the past year when the Integration Exploration Committee sent a packet and a video to all the congregations, asking them which of two models they preferred: a) Continued Cooperation or b) Integration.

But the response form had no place for congregations to say that they preferred Continued Cooperation! (As in, “Choose your ice cream, raspberry or chocolate? Oh, sorry—no chocolate!”)

Never mind. There was almost no response. Congregations representing only 3.5 % of the membership returned these one-sided forms. But the com-

*continued on page 6*



continued from page 5

mittee engaged two sociologists from one of the sponsors most loudly promoting Integration to produce a 35-page analysis of the tiny response! Even though the "Continued Cooperation" option was eliminated from the form, only 56% of the respondents favored Integration soon or eventually. But the sociologists proclaimed victory and the church press obliged by splashing stories and headlines across their news pages.

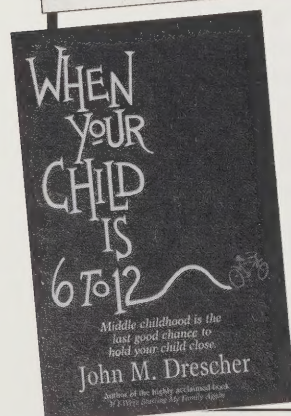
2. The recent "study" on Mennonite peacemaking is another unfortunate example of sociologists using the cloak of "science" to prooftext their premise (see page 26). The way their categories are structured, questions are designed, and interpretations slanted makes clear that another group of "scholars" could come up with very different conclusions. Yet many in the church treat these studies as though they are objective!

Perhaps it's time to recognize that sociologists may not be equipped to be the miracle mirrors some expect. Discerning the will of God is a bit more complex than commissioning sociologists to do another "study." —MG



*"Remember, in the other version they had a pea-green boat, and here they're using public transportation."*

Drawing by M. Twobly. © 1993, The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.



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# PHOTOGRAPHY

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## *and* a Life Sentence

text and photographs by Howard Zehr

*At the recent opening of a show at The People's Place Gallery, Howard Zehr reflected on photographing men and women sentenced to life imprisonment. These comments are adapted from that address; the photographs are from that project.*

I am currently interviewing and making portraits of men and women in Pennsylvania prisons who are serving life sentences without possibility of parole. The subjects are people; the prints are black and white.

This project brings together two major themes in my life. First, I have had a long-standing concern about how punitive our society is and how much we rely on prisons. Over the past two decades I have worked as a criminal justice specialist, involved with victims, with offenders, with victim-offender reconciliation, with the concept of "restorative justice." I have come to believe that we are so preoccupied with punishment that we have missed the point of justice. In doing so, we have ignored the needs of victims as well as offenders. In fact, we have overlooked the real meaning of crime.

One of my goals is to help "demystify" crime—to remove it from the language of symbols and politics and to return it to the realm of real experience. Crime is a violation of people by people.

Second, this project represents my commitment to photography. Photography has been a way for me to go beyond rational, linear ways of knowing, a way to get in touch with the intuitive. My training in graduate school developed the rational and, I think, suppressed the emotional and intuitive. Photography

has been an important way for me to cultivate other essential ways of knowing.

I have found that photography can both address and communicate issues. I believe that *visuals* are an essential element in changing minds. Words alone can't do it.

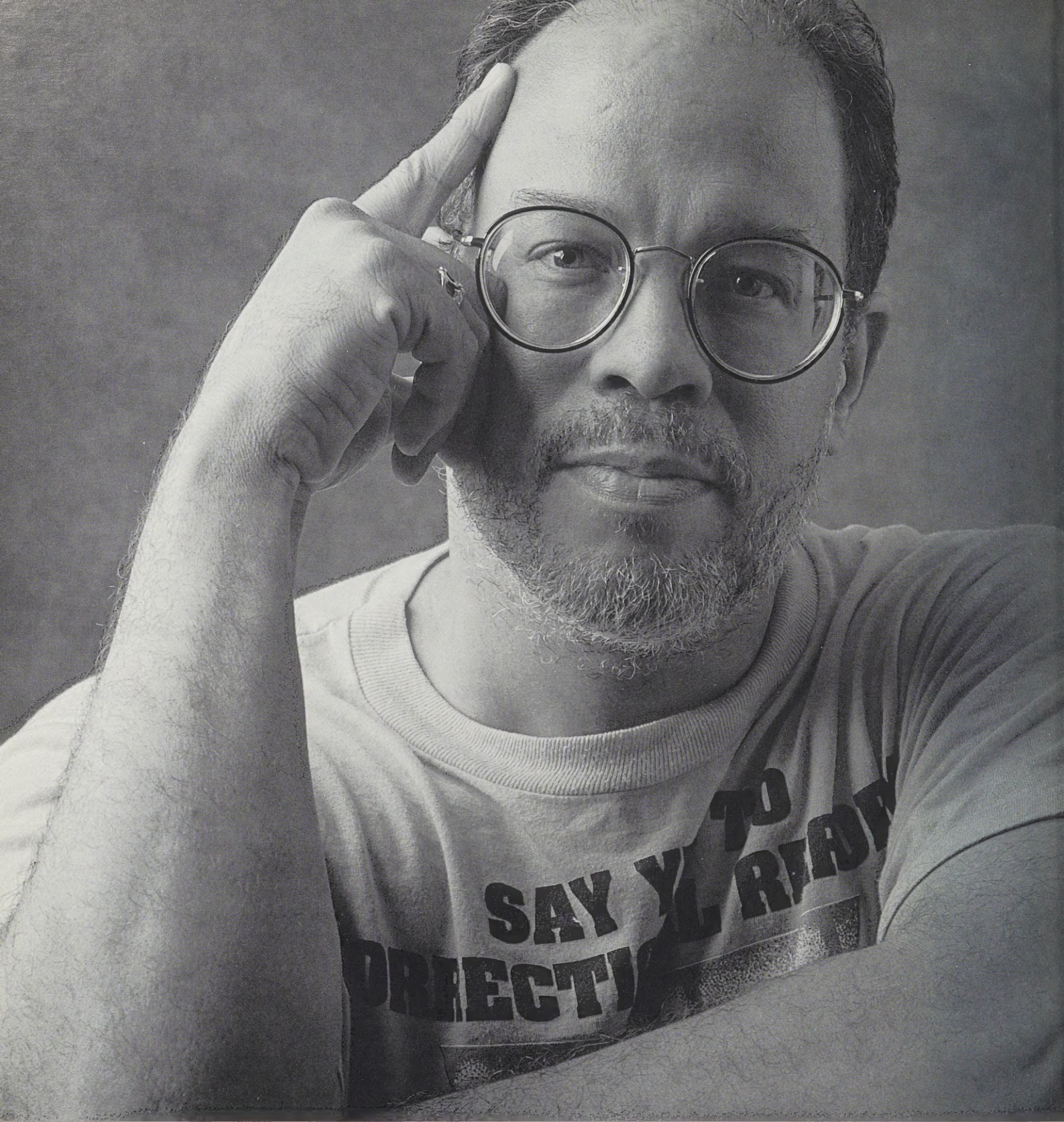
Try this simple test. Think of some memory—from childhood of a loving encounter or of something that frightened you. Chances are you are seeing an image, likely a *still* image and not a moving one. We remember in images, especially in still images.

Not only are images the building blocks of memory, they are also carriers of emotions. Painter/photographer Ben Shahn says it like this, "Not only do almost all images, to a greater or lesser degree, have some emotional coloration, but so do emotions exist in image form. And I believe that emotion cannot exist free of image." We cannot neglect this dimension in our efforts to communicate.

I have come to believe that photographs—visuals—are an important element in changing people's minds. Usually we need to combine photographs and words since photos by themselves may be too ambiguous. They need words to set a context. "The Meaning of Life" project has allowed me to bring the two together.

On one level, "life" is a life sentence. I wanted to





*"Those parables about the lost sheep, the lost coin, the one about the son who squandered his inheritance, are very much what we're talking about with lifers. Many of us are lost sheep. Many of us are lost coins. And many of us are that son who just went away and squandered everything on lavish living. We'd like to go back and work in the garden as a laborer. Very often our fathers would have us back. But our brothers don't want us back. We're asking our brothers to forgive us and to take us back."*—Kenneth Tervalon

(Soon after this interview, Kenneth Tervalon became one of the very few lifers in Pennsylvania whose sentences have been commuted by the governor. He is now on parole.)



explore, with those experiencing it, what it means to be locked up for life with little or no possibility for release. But I also wanted to hear reflections on life itself from people who have had to think very seriously about life—more seriously than most of us, probably, because of the difficulty of their life circumstances and because of the life they took.

Lifer Irvin Moore says, “Life to us has two meanings. Life is a life, the generic term—being alive, waking up every day, seeing the sun. Life is also a sentence to serve. In Pennsylvania, life is to be served until you die.” I wanted to explore these two dimensions of life with people who had thought deeply about them.

In Pennsylvania, lifers have all been convicted of involvement in murder in some way, either directly or indirectly. These people epitomize our fears and stereotypes. In reality, though, lifers are some of the most mature prisoners and least likely to repeat their crimes. They often provide crucial leadership inside prison. So lifers are a group with whom we can challenge and explore our own stereotypes.

I have been motivated in this project by three specific goals. First, I wanted to confront our stereotypes by showing lifers as individuals through their words and portraits. I also wanted to explore the meaning and implications of life sentences as social policy. Finally, I

had a dream of using the *process* of interviewing and photographing as a way to empower and heal.

I became interested in the situation of lifers when I learned to know some of them in the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) which I help lead at Graterford Prison. I began doing photography of families visiting at Graterford. I worked with several lifers who staff the Family Resource Center for children who are visiting, making prints of fathers with their children to hang on the walls of the visiting room. The lifers who selected these photographs wanted to provide visual models of fathers interacting with their children.

When I learned that the Commissioner of Corrections wanted to talk about VORP, I showed him some of these photos and outlined my idea for this project. He gave his permission, asking that I include other prisons besides Graterford.

Having received the system’s permission, I met with the inmate board of Lifers, Inc., the lifers’ organization at Graterford, and outlined my ideas. They were enthusiastically supportive, made some suggestions, and agreed to identify participants and help with logistics. I was pleased since I would not have wanted to proceed without their support and collaboration.

What style of photography should I use? I considered doing a candid, journalistic style of “environmental

portraits” in the prison setting. But I have noticed how often photographers focus on the bizarre features of prison life. I was aware of how the barren and formidable settings of prison trigger our stereotypes about prisoners. If I were photographed in that setting, I would probably look like a stereotypical prisoner, too. So I decided on more formal portraits against a muslin background. The plain background, combined with a “looking-at-the-camera” style of portrait, would force the viewer to confront the subject as a *person* rather than a symbol. I would use a medium format camera that would create sharp images and smooth tones, contributing to a dignified style. I asked that the inmates be allowed to wear street clothes rather than uniforms for their pictures.

I spent about an hour with each person. First I did the interview, which helped to establish rapport; then we did

the photograph. For each person I made one roll—12 images. As much as possible, I let them pose themselves. Lynette Meck, the director of Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) U.S., accompanied me when I interviewed the women.

I gave each participant a matted 8 x 10 print in return for the help each gave me. Most shared these with friends or loved ones. With the help of designer Judith Rempel Smucker and with the editorial assistance of lifers Tyrone Werts and

Bruce Bainbridge, we created an exhibit which we presented to the lifers’ organization at their annual family banquet. They, in turn, presented me with an award which I value a great deal.

Tyrone and Bruce incorporated some of the quotes into the printed program for the banquet. Mohammed, one of the lifers whom I knew through VORP, said to me, “Howard, I read this great quote in the program. Then I looked at the bottom of the page and saw that I said it!” I had given Mohammed a gift of a photograph and a chance to reflect on his life. He, in turn, gave me a gift. That leads me to my next point.

The language and metaphors that we use in photography are profoundly disturbing: we “shoot” a picture; we “take” a photo; we “aim” a camera. Cameras are often designed and handled like guns, and in ads they are often presented as such. The language of photography is predominately aggressive, imperialistic, acquisitive, the language of the hunt.

This vocabulary is not inevitable; I am interested in reconceiving photography in another way. The images we photograph actually consist of light reflected back from the subject which we receive. Photography can be understood, then, as a gift, something received from the subject. It is an exchange between subject and photographer. An attitude of meditation is more appropriate

The language and metaphors  
that we use in photography  
are profoundly disturbing:  
we “shoot” a picture;  
we “take” a photo;  
we “aim” a camera.





*"I was in my 40s when I came in. I'm 67 now. I was a practicing psychiatrist and I'd like to get out of prison and contribute. But if I can't, I hope that I'll do as well here as I can in any community: contribute and not make life intolerable for myself or others."*—Lois June Farquharson

Photography should be a way of respecting the subject, and that belief undergirds my landscapes as well as my portraits.

Albert Renger-Patzsch, a German photographer who worked earlier in this century, put it another way: "It [photography] seems to me better suited for doing justice to an object than for expressing artistic individuality."

I find "doing justice" to the subject a wonderful way to conceive my mission! I have learned from listening to victims and to offenders that story-telling is vitally important, and that self-insight can come through sensitive questioning and feedback by another. Insight can also come from seeing one's image in photos, or so some of the lifers told me after seeing their pictures. So I have wanted to use interviewing and photography in a way that contributes to empowerment and healing.

I have struggled in my criminal justice work to understand and communicate why the injury of crime is so traumatic. I am concluding that the violation of crime is fundamentally an attack on *meaning* and that justice and healing have to do with regaining meaning.

As Robert Schreiter has written in the book, *Reconciliation: Mission and Ministry in a Changing Social Order*, we construct our sense of identity and safety to keep from feeling vulnerable. We do this by creating symbols of space and events and preserving them in narratives and stories, about who and what we are. These are our "truths." They are the source of our sense of safety and identity.

Suffering—whether we are victims or oppressors—is essentially an attack on these narratives, an erosion of meaning. To heal, then, we have to recover our stories or create new narratives that take into account the awful things that have happened. The suffering must become part of our memory, part of our stories.

We cannot recover this sense of meaning without expressing our pain. For many, it is essential to retell the "narrative of violence" repeatedly. This allows us to ease the trauma and to begin to reconstruct a new narrative, to put boundaries around our story of suffering, to be victorious over it.

This need to tell our stories and truths is important in a process like victim-offender reconciliation, where we listen to victims and offenders telling their stories to us and to each other. In a small way, that is also what I hoped to accomplish here by interviewing and photographing and exhibiting the results. I wanted to contribute to the construction—or reconstruction—of meaning and identity for those who participated.

than a hunt; an attitude of receptivity is required.

Photos like these of the lifers are usually "taken" by researchers as grist for their study mills. Instead, I wanted this project to be subject-oriented. I wanted them to participate and even to feel empowered, valued, treated with respect. I didn't want to take but also to give something back. If possible, I wanted to contribute in some small way to their own self-insight and maybe even healing.

Several years ago I conducted a similar project in a New Orleans housing project. Considered by some to be one of the worst in the country, it frequently receives negative coverage in the press. Working in the style I have outlined, we eventually had an opening of the exhibit inside the housing project itself and presented the residents' council with their own version. Residents say that not only did the project help others to see them in more positive ways, it helped the residents themselves to have new appreciation for their community. My hope is that the "Meaning of Life" project can do likewise.

There are a number of photographers who are seeking to work in this spirit of receptivity and collaboration.

John Running in *Pictures for Solomon* expresses it this way:

"... the pictures I take are an exchange with the people I photograph. This book is really a collection of gifts. ... Making a photograph is usually a collaboration between the photographer and the subject. It doesn't matter if the subject is a landscape, a still life, an animal, or a person.

"There is a responsibility that comes with making photographs, an obligation to the subject and to the pictures that result from our collaboration."



In fact, the search for meaning is one of the themes that often emerged in these interviews. Some expressed it as an effort to make some good come out of the bad. (This, by the way, is a common theme among victims, too). Many of the lifers I interviewed are involved in programs to assist others and /or to prevent young people from getting into situations like they experienced. It is their way of making restitution and creating good from bad, to regain meaning.

Others express their search for meaning in their need to make each day count. Several lifers suggested that, perhaps more than those of us on the outside, they have to consciously work to do something worthwhile each day. Otherwise, given their bleak futures, life might be without meaning.

Nearly all look for hope in a seemingly hopeless situation. Many spoke of their concern for victims, even though I did not ask about this. Questions of guilt and forgiveness were on their minds. And I heard many stories of inner journeys: of midlife crises, stages of adjustment, struggles for identity and self-worth. Many, like Robert Hagood, talked about the importance of religious faith: "Like all living beings, a lifer learns to adapt and to survive. But some of us go a little farther. We contemplate our lives and the way we live them. We contemplate on such things as God, life, death, heaven, hell. If you're fortunate, you will find something to believe in other than yourself. Faith is now a part of my every-day development."

I asked lifer Gene McGuire what he was proudest of in his life. Here is his answer: "I think the one that stands out is the realization that I have the ability to make decisions good and bad. I have the ability in me to make good decisions and right decisions and I don't need anyone else to live my life. I don't need to blame anybody else for the choices I make. I can make good choices and I can make bad choices. I guess I never thought about that before." What a profound lesson to learn in an environment where the range of personal choice is so limited.

All of this has affected me significantly. I am still involved with the Victim Offender Reconciliation Program at Graterford. And I recently completed a stint as artist-in-residence at Graterford (with men) and Muncy (with women), teaching and doing photography with lifers. Support for my expenses is provided by a grant from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts.

I think about these people often. I sit on my deck sipping espresso and I think, "They will never do this." I go into a restaurant, I run to the store, I go for a walk, and the

realization hits me: "They will never do this small thing."

My experience has also helped me to rethink the purposes of art. Suzy Gablik in *The Reenchantment of Art* characterizes the traditional view of art like this: "We have been taught that art is supremely individualistic, oriented to the creation of a product; individuals and individual art works are the basic elements. Art is a matter of radical autonomy that deemphasizes connections to the community."

She goes on, however, to suggest a new mission and vision for the artistic impulse: "Community is the starting point for new models of relatedness, in which the paradigm of social conscience replaces that of individual genius. In the past, we have made much of the idea of art as a mirror (reflecting the times); we have had art as a hammer (social protest); we have had art as furniture (something to hang on the walls); and we have had art as a search for the self. There is another kind of art, which speaks to the power of connectedness and establishes bonds, art that calls us into relationship."

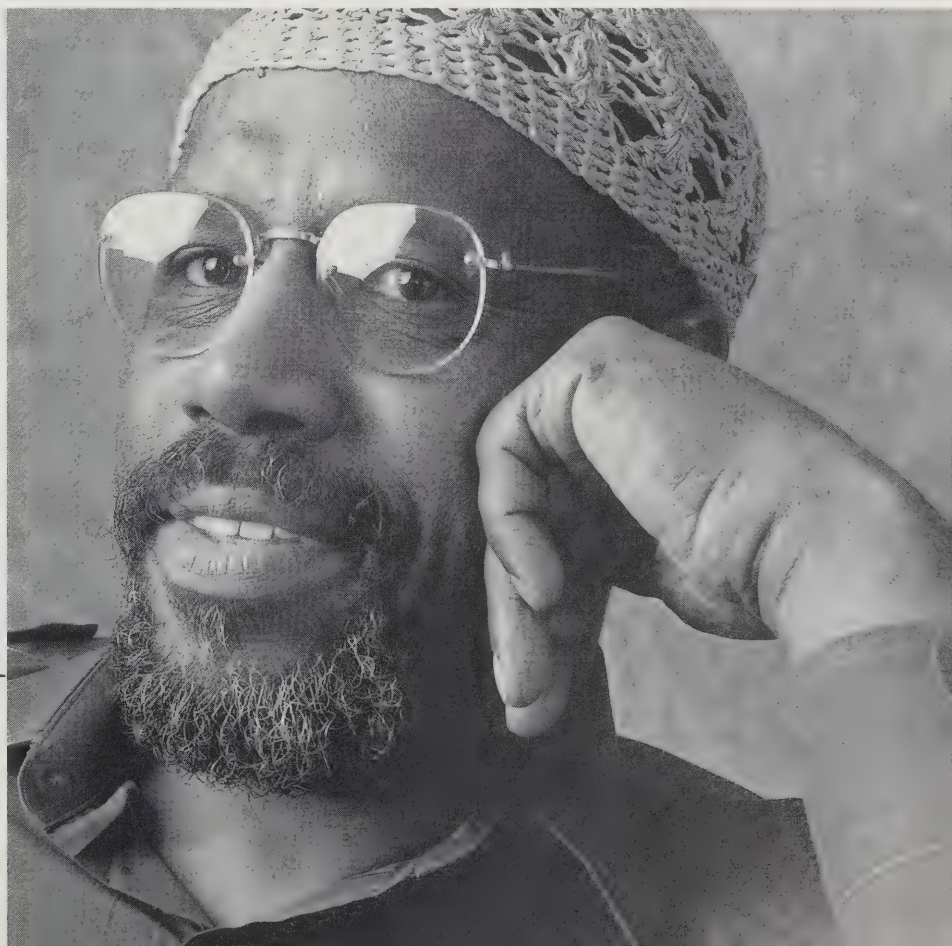
That is *my* commitment: to photography that speaks to the power of connectedness, that calls us into relationship—relationship with other people, with the environment, with our Creator.

My hope is simply this: that my work *does justice* to the subject.

*Dr. Howard Zehr is a writer and consultant on criminal justice issues. Since 1979, he has served as director of the Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Office on Crime and Justice. He was instrumental in developing the first Victim Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP) in the U.S. and has helped many other communities to start similar programs.*

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*"I find myself wanting to tap all the potential that I have to do something with my life. Getting in touch with my spiritual side and constantly pursuing that through practice has really helped me."—James Taylor*





# BEDRU HUSSEIN: Gentle *and* Intense

by Merle Good

A seventh-grade Ethiopian boy was playing with his friends during recess when the wind blew several pieces of paper across the school yard. Young Bedru was drawn to one which had English words on it.

He took the paper in to his teacher and asked what it meant. The teacher (it was a government school) wrote the words on the board, but no one understood them. The quotation was: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter heaven."

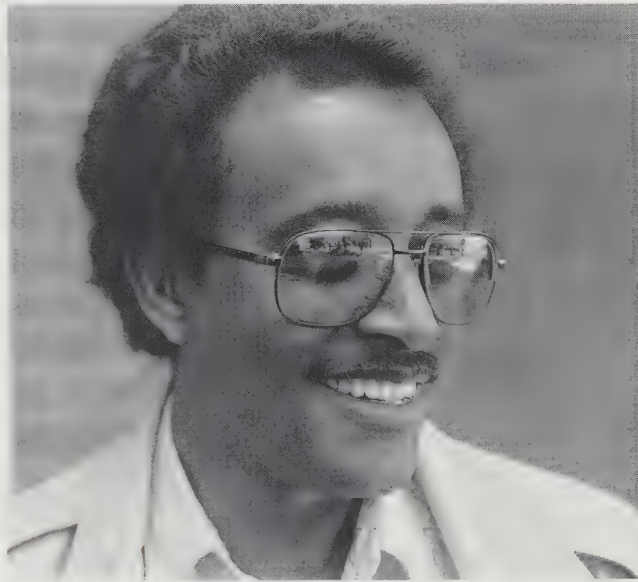
No one could explain it. Then an elderly man who had come to school late in life raised his hand and said it was from the New Testament. He explained about the gates surrounding Jerusalem, one of which was called Eye of the Needle. He told the class how a merchant had to unload the camel, stoop down, drag the goods to the other side, then pull the camel through and finally remount in order to enter the city.

"That stayed in my heart a long time," Bedru remembers. The old man told the class about Jesus and his practice of illustrating spiritual realities with physical examples. It was a vivid experience.

Bedru Hussein is now Executive Secretary of the Meserete Kristos Church, the Mennonite Church in Ethiopia. He has come a long distance from his Muslim childhood.

Bedru was the first in his family to become a Christian. His decision brought opposition and difficulty. "One day I saw a friend in the cafeteria at school with an unusually bright face," he remembers. "I was in grade 12 and I had a great spiritual hunger, but there was no one to tell me."

Bedru's friend was a Pentecostal Christian and he invited him to a youth center in Addis Ababa to see a film. He felt drawn in by the event. "Tears were flowing



The growth in the  
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And so are the Muslims  
as people leave  
the Coptic Church.

down my face, and I accepted Jesus as my Savior that night."

These new friends told him about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and "I said, 'If God gives to me, why not?' So the next evening at dusk we went to an empty football field and we started to pray (there were five of us). And as soon as we started praying, I got filled! It was a glorious experience for me."

Everything changed for Bedru. "I started to love people—that was a change. And I knew Christ was in me."

His father opposed him. "He would not talk with me or eat with me for three solid months. He was very angry. He said I may have to leave the house."

Bedru's mother gradually listened to his testimony and started to believe. Bedru's brothers and sisters began to attend his

church also. His father was in the military and had to go on assignment for six months. Bedru wrote to him to explain his new faith. At one point his father replied, "Pray for me, that I may come to the light."

Bedru hoped to become a doctor. While studying biology at the university, he also sang in the choir of the Pentecostal church begun by the students. He started to preach and witness, and people responded to his ministry.

Years later, after he had learned to know the Mennonites and when the Mennonite church had to go underground, he looked back on these student days as times of great instruction. His first imprisonment came in 1972 when an informer infiltrated their group. The military police came to their place of worship, and 21 were arrested and put in prison. Three of them were placed in a special cell where the police beat them.

"I felt like I was beaten by a sponge. It was the grace



of God—I remember it very clearly.” The beating was severe, but Bedru suffered no bleeding or broken bones.

Later they were put on trial for illegal assembly, charged a small fine, and released with the warning not to meet again. But after a month, they resumed meetings, underground, meeting early in the morning or late at night for four years.

Months later he and his wife were both imprisoned along with 200 others when they attended church in Addis Ababa. After two weeks in prison, they were released on bail with a requirement of reporting to the court monthly. But there were to be no more meetings or they would automatically go to jail for two years without trial. Bedru believes the Orthodox Church encouraged the military police in its policies.

By now Bedru was a high school biology teacher, but he was also learning that he enjoyed being a Bible teacher. In 1976 he moved with his family to Nazareth where he would teach at the Nazareth Bible Academy operated by the Mennonites. “I knew Mennonites in university, but this was my first association with them.”

Over time Bedru became an elder and started to work with the leadership of the Meserete Kristos Church, which had about 3,000 members at that time. He joined the Executive Committee and helped with leadership training for Mennonites as well as other denominational leaders.

“The revival grew at the same time that the communist movement was growing,” he recalls in a voice at once gentle and intense. Tension and struggle characterized these years, “but the groundwork for the later underground church was being laid.”

Then in 1982, the church and the school were nationalized. Six prominent Mennonite leaders were imprisoned. The money in the bank was frozen. Bedru became director of the Nazareth school for the balance of the year, but then it became a Marxist school. “We had to hand everything over to the government. Meserete Kristos Church seemed especially targeted because it was attracting so many young people.”

Bedru moved to the capital city with his family (Bedru and his wife Kelemwork Belete have three sons and one daughter) and joined a health research institute. He worked there for eight years. He became deeply involved with the underground church. “I felt a stronger and stronger call. I could not resist it. I became a full-time minister in 1990.”

The Institute issued an attractive offer to Bedru to go to Michigan State University for his master’s degree. “What should I do? I told my wife that if God and the church call me, I will serve the church and not go to the States.”

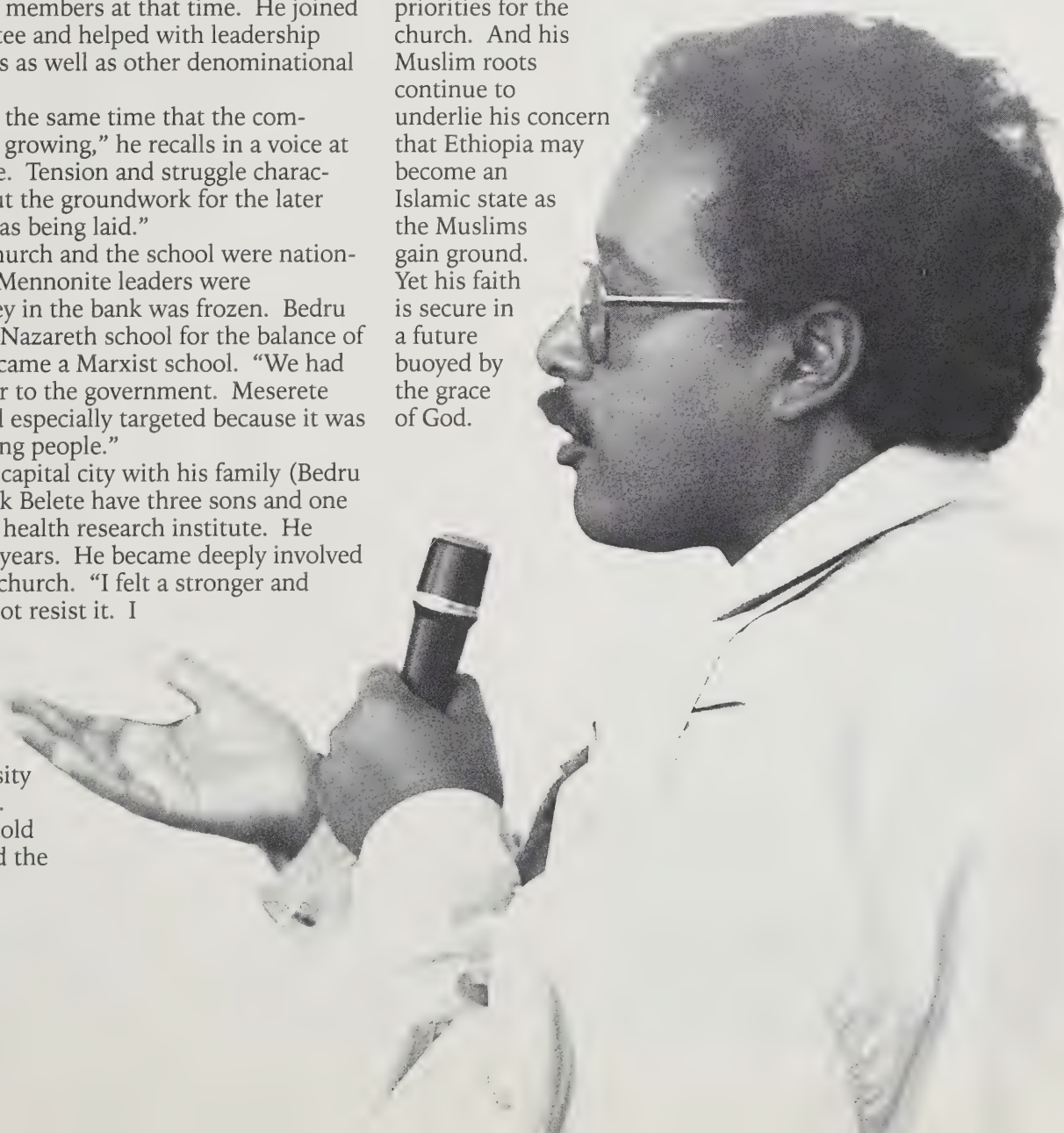
That’s when Bedru was called to

his current position of Executive Secretary of the Mennonite church in Ethiopia. Two years later in May, 1992 the Marxist government fell, and as the church resurfaced, they discovered that they had grown from 5,000 members before they were forced underground to 50,000 members (ten times as many). Their current membership is more than 54,000. The church has spread from two regions to all parts of the country. Their budget from local resources has grown from \$2,500 (U.S.) before nationalization in 1982 to \$362,720 (U.S.), while the budget from external resources has dropped from \$70,000 (U.S.) to \$14,100 (U.S.). A remarkable story, to say the least.

Bedru enjoys his work. “I believe in corporate leadership in the church, and I appreciate the support of my brothers and sisters.”

The growth in the Mennonite church in Ethiopia has been unusual, but other evangelical groups are growing too. And so are the Muslims as people leave the Coptic Church.

Bedru advocates more church-to-church relationships for Mennonites around the world. Leadership training has become one of his top priorities for the church. And his Muslim roots continue to underlie his concern that Ethiopia may become an Islamic state as the Muslims gain ground. Yet his faith is secure in a future buoyed by the grace of God.





# The Devil in College Chapel

A Missionary  
Confesses  
the  
Sins of His  
Youth

by  
J. Nelson Kraybill

Chapel attendance was mandatory at Mennonite colleges in 1974, and students who sought refuge from the daily dose of piety had little recourse but to doze through the exercise or face formal charges from the Dean's office. Once in a great while, though, the fettered imagination of a thousand students seemed to converge on one creative spot, and a prank erupted during chapel—a sparrow turned loose, a firecracker on a slow-burning fuse, or a whoopie cushion on the speaker's chair.

Such harmless gestures were a welcome reminder of Anabaptist commitment to free choice, but scarcely seemed equal to the gravity of the situation. It should be possible, my roommate said, to design the Chapel Prank of the Decade, something that would inspire a whole generation of free-thinking young people to celebrate their nonconformist roots. In one great windfall of serendipity, early in our brainstorming, we hit upon the notion of a pie-throwing catapult.

During the next several days we solved a series of technical problems and began to build. The device consisted of a wooden base about three feet long, with a sturdy vertical superstructure at one end. The catapult arm rested on top of the base, fastened by sturdy hinges. Between the arm and the superstructure stretched a hefty spring. A stiff wire lay over the catapult arm when it was loaded, holding it down like a mousetrap.

We did some experimenting with the timing mechanism and finally settled on a wind-up alarm clock. Two keys protrude from the back of such a clock, one to wind the time and another the alarm. We cut a slit into the end of a thread spool, and shoved it onto the alarm key. The spool revolved steadily when the alarm sounded, winding in a string attached to a greased metal pin inserted through two screw eyes. When the pin slid out, it released the wire that held down the catapult arm and *voila!* We had action.

For reasons of conscience we avoided blueberry pie as ammunition (it stains) and went with apple pie. To be certain of a

direct hit we needed to make a few practice shots, which required a dummy pie of exact weight. A copy of the college's "Guidelines for Our Life Together," wrapped in a bath towel, served admirably. We were ready for the operation.

Only three conspirators were privy to the plans so far, but now we needed help to get access to the scene of the crime. The chapel building at our college is a modern, circular structure that seats over one thousand—and always is locked at night. The podium is near the center of the room with benches on three sides. A balcony (usually locked during chapel in those days) runs the full circumference of the room. On that balcony we needed to plant our little surprise.

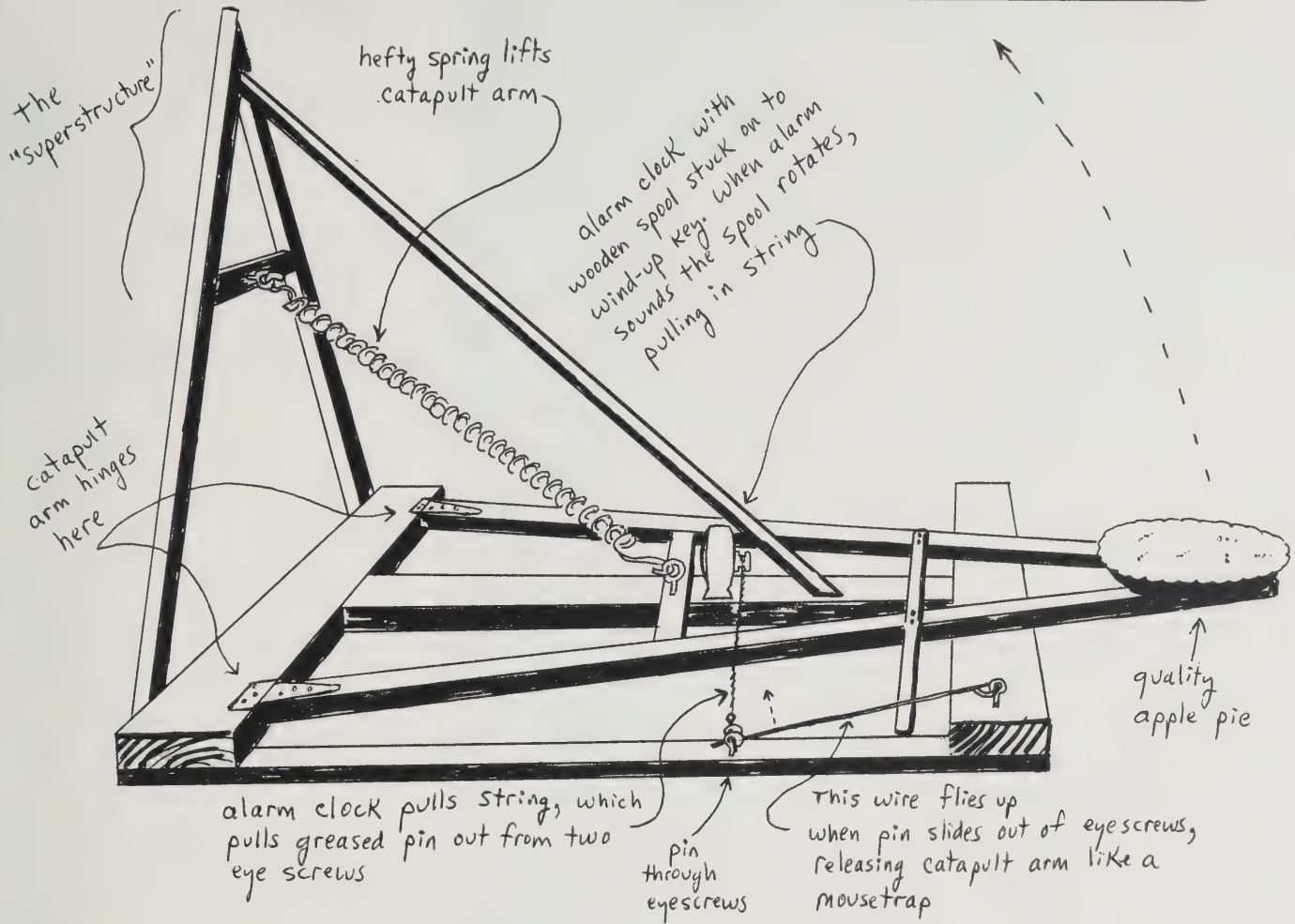
Reluctantly we revealed our plan to a former employee of the college maintenance department. He proved sympathetic to our cause and produced a key that would get us into the building. All that remained was to choose the occasion, and that became obvious with one look at the schedule of chapel topics. *Demonology!* No kidding, on Tuesday of the following week a professor from the nearby Mennonite seminary was speaking on demons. Satan and his minions were popular that year. *The Exorcist* was playing in many theaters.

At 3:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning, while the night watchman enjoyed coffee in the mail room, my roommate and I spirited our contraption across campus. Inside the cavernous building we worked with dim flashlights, placing the catapult on the balcony behind the podium. After several practice shots the book and towel hit the podium every time, and we knew we had a winner. We attached a cardboard devil face to the catapult arm so it would appear to hover above the balcony rail when the deed was done. With the apple pie loaded and the alarm set to go off at 9:10 a.m., we went back to bed.

Chapel services were broadcast live over college radio that year. Tapes were available for purchase, and I have had occasion since 1974 to relive the events of that morning.



# BASIC PIE-THROWING MACHINE



Listening to the tape, I am reminded that the speaker was a cut above the average fare we heard in daily chapel. He had read more than two hundred books about the devil and even wrote one himself. As I got absorbed in the flow of his talk that morning, it suddenly occurred to me *this guy doesn't deserve what's coming!* It was too late.

At 9:10 a noisy alarm disrupted the solemn assembly. The seminary professor paused with a puzzled look on his face. *Is that a fire alarm?* his expression seemed to say. Nobody moved, but all eyes lifted to the balcony at the front. The professor cleared his throat and restarted the paragraph he had interrupted. Before he reached the end of his sentence, a ripping mechanical sound burst from the

balcony as springs and hinges leaped into motion. An apple pie was in free flight, sailing in a high trajectory above the pipe organ. The projectile passed through its apogee, gathered speed on the downward leg, and struck the hapless speaker square between the shoulder blades.

In slow motion the professor wheeled around to meet eyes with the only person behind him—the provost of the college. As he turned, the pie slid off his back, down a pant leg, and onto the floor. The stern expression of the provost left little doubt *he* was innocent.

Now the gathered assembly had a full view of the leering devil head, high above the podium and still swaying from the launch. The professor could not see the offending apparition and gamely

started the same paragraph for a third time. Silence in the audience gave way to a titter of whispers and snorts, then swelling laughter. Two administrators slipped out of the auditorium and stationed themselves at the locked doors of the balcony, determined to catch perpetrators of this outrage as soon as chapel was over.

With all eyes focused above and behind him, the professor realized he was up against competition. He leaned forward, glimpsed the wicked face, and let out a hearty laugh. It was merry, devil-may-care laughter, the kind of spontaneous grace sometimes absent in our solemn assemblies. Scarcely missing a beat, he completed his prepared remarks and gave a closing prayer. On the cassette tape of the service, just a second before the





*The remorseless inventor with his machine.*

radio station shut down the microphone at the end of the prayer, you can hear the professor whisper in a surprised tone, "It's a pie!"

Half a year later, I had lunch with the college president. The night before someone (not me!) had dumped detergent into an outdoor water fountain, creating a mountain of suds. The topic of pranks came up, and the president said, "By the way, were you in chapel last spring when the devil visited?" With the most innocent voice I could muster, I answered, "Why? What happened?"

The president leaned forward and in a conspiratorial undertone described how the catapult worked.

"Wouldn't you know," he said with a chuckle, "the pie hit him!" The only response I could manage was to ask if the administration ever caught the culprits. "No," said the president, "but we pretty well narrowed it down to East Hall." East Hall was a small housing unit for a dozen seniors; I lived in a dormitory at the other end of campus. I shook my head slowly and expressed my shock that anyone would do such a thing to a visiting speaker.

Ten years later I was a Mennonite minister and attended a leadership training event. Our speaker that weekend was the same seminary

professor, this time dealing with some topic other than demons. At the last meal of the conference I shared a table with the man, and we talked on a variety of topics. Then I gathered some courage and said "Brother, what did it cost to dry-clean a suit back in 1974?" I pulled out my wallet and laid several dollars on the table. He gave me a blank stare, and I repeated, "What did it cost to dry-clean a suit in 1974?"

A flash of recognition crossed his wife's face. She pushed her chair back from the table, pointed at me, and started laughing. "The pie!" she cried, "the pie!" Then the professor started laughing, a devil-may-care belly laugh, and offered a handshake. "I wondered all these years who did that," he said, as he refused the money. He divulged that he took the catapult back to the seminary where he taught, and displayed it to students. His adult son got the device and took it home. A while later there was a fire in his son's house, and the catapult went up in smoke. *The devil retakes his own*, I thought with a shudder.

The statute of limitations on college pranks is twenty years, and with the professor's forgiveness I'm definitely in the clear. A few years ago I served on the Board of Overseers at the college where we launched the pie. On one occasion I even spoke in chapel and treated another generation of student to something much less compelling than demonology. I half expected to hear an alarm in the middle of my talk, but the hour passed without event. If there is any justice in this world, though, a pie awaits me somewhere in the future. All I ask of the devils who deliver it is, do it with imagination!

*Nelson Kraybill lives in England, at a safe distance from his alma mater in the American Midwest, and works with Mennonite Board of Missions as Programme Director of the London Mennonite Centre.*



# Parents' Last Great Opportunity

by John M. Drescher

Middle childhood—when children are between ages six and twelve—is a stage often swept over too quickly by parents and educators because it is so calm compared to the storm of adolescence. If children will ever be good, they will be good during these years. And so parents assume that all is going rather well during this time because the child, on the whole, seems cooperative, wants to please, and loves to be with the family.

It is not overstating the situation to think of this period of childhood as “the last chance.” It is the time to do many things with and for your children which you will not be able to do in the same way or to the same extent again.

## Holding Your Child

Middle childhood is the last good chance to hold your child close. Most children up until the ages of eleven or twelve love to be held and respond lovingly to a hug or kiss from parents. A child basks in the warmth of parental love. A child needs the assurance of being loved deeply and the security of feeling at ease in the arms of parents. An adolescent is unlikely to feel close and cared for by parents if the warmth of love and togetherness is not experienced prior to the turbulent teens.

In the middle years, the child's most important reason for wanting to be good is not fear of punishment or disapproval, but the love of parents. When love is lost or not felt, a child has little reason to be good.

This means relationships must be relaxed and comfortable. Love in the early years has a lot to do with being held close. The child must feel loved in spite of failure and even wrongdoing. Especially in times of failure and wrongdoing, love must come through.

## Spending Time With Your Child

Middle childhood is the last good chance for children and parents to spend quality and quantity time together. In adolescence the child craves time primarily with others of the same age. During middle childhood the child loves to do things with its parents and family. And this togetherness builds feelings of belonging. But togetherness takes time—planned time and special time.

Giving ourselves is not easy. It takes purpose and planning. One father, after his son was beyond the time of persuasion and punishment, said, “I planned to go out with my boy and be his companion, when I had time. I hoped to interest him in young people's activities, when I had time. I promised I would talk with him like a father should with his son, when I had time. But for over twenty years, for every one thought of my son, I had a hundred thoughts of my business.”

If we as parents do not give loving attention during this stage, the child will get angry attention from us by misbehaving.

## Instilling Values

By the age of thirteen, the average child is said to have asked five hundred thousand questions. This is the Creator's way of providing opportunity for our children to learn the answers to life's questions before adolescence. And during these preadolescent years, we have a chance to share our beliefs with our children. That's half a million opportunities to teach something about the meaning of life and to impart our values. These questions are all what, why, and how questions, which can stretch us beyond our own resources. These moments give us abundant opportunities to relate all of life to our basic values and outlook on life.

By adolescence, children know what their parents



believe and think, and how their parents will respond to almost any given situation. They have either experienced a close parental relationship, or they have sensed neglect and distance, depending upon the responses which parents have made to their questions and needs. Their question at this stage is, "What will I believe and think, and how will I respond to what I have seen and heard?"

## Reading to Your Child

Children in their middle years find reading to be one of their favorite activities. And they love to be read to. It is particularly important to read to the child stories which build emotional warmth, caring, and love, because it is through feelings that the child identifies, even more than through facts. Through emotions the child makes application to life, more than through careful reasoning. I cannot stress too much that the feelings generated through reading and contact with parents will guide and bless the child during the rest of life.

Bedtime is a good time to read to a child. It seems that God has put within children a hesitancy to go to bed, so that parents, if they will, can have a special time at the close of the day to spend with their children. We are told that a child awakens with much the same spirit the child had when going to sleep. Here is a great privilege and opportunity to not only give needed guidance, but also to meet the child's basic emotional need to love and to be loved.

## Teaching the Facts of Sex

Middle childhood is the primary time to discuss sex freely and to talk about the issues involved in dating, courtship, and marriage. All the facts of sex should be shared before adolescence. It is now that the child can learn and accept all the facts of sex without emotional overtones or embarrassment.

We usually begin four to six years too late in giving our children specific guidance in dating, courtship, and marriage. It's rather difficult to give instructions for dating to a teenager in the heat of that experience. It isn't easy to try to set standards for boy-girl relationships for teens who are sure parents' ideas are centuries behind the time. Standards are instilled very early.

Here, then, are several examples of "last things" we can do naturally with our children during their middle childhood years. These are the years of great possibilities for closeness, communication, and counsel. If we miss these opportunities to relate to and respond in the proper way to our child, the years ahead will be difficult ones. But if we seize these years when the child loves and longs for closeness with parents, the pattern is also set for closeness in the future years.

Excerpted and reprinted by permission of Good Books from the new book, *When Your Child Is 6-12* by John M. Drescher.

## "I Get my Best Ideas When I Mow the Lawn"

John Drescher lives with his eyes and ears wide open. It's a practice that has resulted in his authoring nearly 30 books, most of them about living conscientiously.

"Practically everything I've written has come out of my own searching," he reflected in a recent interview with *Festival Quarterly*. "When our children were small, not much was being published about families. I was invited out to camps to talk about raising children, so I'd put presentations together, get the audiences' responses to what I said, refine it, then prepare it as a manuscript."

It has been a natural process for a man who, for as long as he can remember, "just loved words."

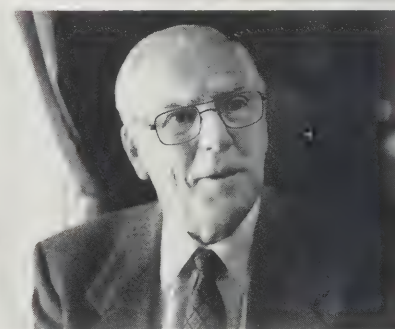
Yet the invitation to become editor of *Gospel Herald* (the official denominational weekly magazine of the Mennonite Church) in the early '60s caught him by surprise. "I was in my late 20s, a pastor and overseer in

Ohio. I would sometimes write little short articles for the paper—and I guess they were looking for someone in the church who wouldn't stir things up!"

The job offered Drescher the opportunity to write regularly. "The thing I liked best was writing editorials. I always had a stack of them. The thing I missed most about leaving editing was not being able to write editorials!"

Drescher is still looking for more time to write. Although his active circuit as a speaker keeps him ever stimulated and in touch with audiences' responses to his thinking, his list of writing ideas is as lengthy as ever.

*When Your Child is 6 to 12* was on his mind for a long time before he squeezed out the time to write it. "I began to realize that I set my own standards during that time in my life about alcohol, about dating."



His current life continually supplies him with book ideas also. "I'd like to write *For the Love of Marriage* in which I'd start each chapter with a different situation I've encountered in counselling."

Then there is the whole matter of being parents to adult children. "When are children raised? You can't really say. Many of my children's peers are now, after 20 years of marriage, getting divorced. You have to come to a place where you say, they're living their lives."

Cultivating book ideas is a life practice that continues for John Drescher. —PPG



# THE UNTOUCHABLE

A short story by Dorothy Friesen

I don't think it was my imagination. A collective gasp did ripple through the congregation when people saw our missionary, Anne Wiens, follow the casket of Schwester Wiens, the prophetess, into the sanctuary. Walking beside her was a small, very dark Indian man in a white shirt and ill-fitting suit and he held Anne's elbow in a familiar way.

The body of Schwester Wiens had been found among the stacks of yellowed newspapers near her telephone on Christmas Day, but the funeral was delayed for two weeks so her adopted daughter, Anne, could travel to Winnipeg from her remote mission station in India.

Schwester Wiens regularly foresaw church splits, and she had predicted the Great Flood of 1950 an entire year before the Red River spilled over its banks. But her most persistent prophecy was that she would not die before the Messiah returned. No one really believed her, but no one wanted to run the risk of missing anything at the funeral. The Mennonite high school canceled classes, and the public school near the church might as well have, since the desks of the Mennonite students and teachers who comprised half the school were empty that day, too. Two hours before the service was scheduled to begin, the church was packed to capacity.

Cousin Julie and I, lucky to get seats in the front row of the balcony, leaned over the railing for a better view. Anne Wiens and the Indian man stood at the casket, which the funeral directors placed beside the oak communion table with the engraved words, *Dieses tut zu meinem Gedaechtnis* (Do this in remembrance of me.). "He's shorter than she is," whispered Julie. We were fifteen and both aware that the man is supposed to be taller than the woman.

For years, Father and Mother had prayed for this woman every morning without fail, and so had I as soon as I learned to talk and could pronounce the name

of Anne Wiens. I was six years old the first time I actually saw her, and I noticed then she had buck teeth. Though Anne was plain, the items she brought to the citywide mission conference were beautiful—bright red, gold, green, and purple cloth, masks, a golden wheel, wooden elephants and tigers, and a musical instrument that looked something like a guitar but gave out an eerie sound when the strings were plucked.

Before the children's meeting began, Cousin Julie and I had circled the display table again and again, touching and smelling everything we could reach. When Anne Wiens needed a volunteer to hold an item, the two of us in identical blue velvet skirts and white blouses sat on the edge of our chairs, waving our arms in unison right from the sockets to make sure that she knew without a doubt that we really wanted to be the volunteers. Cousin Julie who is always loud, kept yelling, "Ask me, ask me!" but I just bored my eyes into Anne's face, hoping to mesmerize her into choosing me.

That night the brightly colored cloth tangled around my body and a mask covered my face so I couldn't breathe, and I gasped loudly for air. Mother, ever alert for a nightmare, was at my bedside with a glass of water and a cool hand for my forehead. But this dream was not terrifying like the usual nightmares of big black dogs running wild in the church basement. Most of the children had dreams after Anne's talk, and the Mennonite mothers across Winnipeg began comparing notes during the closing days of the mission conference. I heard the Mission Board told Anne before they sent her back to India not to visit temples or palaces or festivals.

While Anne labored in the mission field, Julie and I located India on the globe at Julie's house, and we read about the caste system and the untouchables who were so low in society that they weren't even in the system. I imagined Anne eating with people whose very shadow others avoided.



We all knew that Anne loved the people of India  
like God so loved the world,  
but here she was  
in our church sanctuary  
with a specific man.

A few years later Anne gave her report to the church (without bright cloths or strange instruments). She showed slides of rows of Indian men in white shirts standing in front of ugly cement or mud buildings. Once in awhile Anne's figure appeared in the line of men, clutching a Bible to her breast, her sari giving the picture its only touch of color. She named different occasions for each slide—the Easter sunrise service, the Bible camp, the mission emphasis week, the leadership training—but the rows of men and Anne always looked the same to me.

We all knew that Anne loved the people of India like God so loved the world, but here she was in our church sanctuary with a specific man. How did she choose a particular one among the rows of men who looked so alike?

Paster Neufeld motioned the congregation to stand for the opening song and Julie flipped through the hymn book. "She must be over 40," I whispered. Anne Wiens had streaks of gray in her hair. I didn't think a woman with wrinkles and folds of skin developing under her chin should have a boyfriend. Romance was for young people who engaged in courtship rituals like serving coffee and tea at weddings. The boy carries two steaming silver kettles; the girl holds the teacup to be filled. Julie and I often wondered which boy would carry the kettles for us when we were old enough to serve at a wedding. When they were seated on the bench together, Anne was at least a foot taller than the Indian man, and I couldn't imagine her holding out a teacup for him to fill.

I barely mouthed the words of the hymn, and I didn't hear much of the sermon. My eyes, like everyone else's in the church, were fixed on Anne Wiens and the man beside her. I thought about Anne's talk to our junior girls Sunday school class a few years ago. It had been boring, and I stared out the window trying to imagine the golden wheels Anne had showed us in the past, turning around the sun until they

became one with the fiery ball. When Anne asked if there were any questions, Julie was the first to put up her hand.

She brushed her absolutely straight brown hair behind her ear with her hand. "What do girls our age in India do?" she asked. "Some of them might already be married," said Anne and started to describe domestic chores. Julie interrupted. "How do the boys and girls our age get together in the first place? And," she stopped, "and what about men and women, you know, people your age who aren't married?" The air was absolutely still in the little room. Anne stared at Julie and then turned away. I noticed that Anne's hair, rolled up like a carpet, was stuck full of sparkly hair pins. Women in our church don't wear sparkles in their hair. Anne finally said, "This is not a topic for Sunday school. Are there any other questions?" None of us could think of anything after Julie had crossed the invisible boundary. The bell rang and we all filed silently out of the room.

Before I knew it, the funeral service was over and the casket was closed and wheeled up the aisle. It was bitterly cold that day, so only the pastor and immediate family went to the cemetery for the burial. The rest of the congregation and visitors from across the city milled about in the basement, waiting for the family to return so we could eat. No one minded the wait—there was plenty to talk about.

"Well, she's no spring chicken," I heard one man say to an all-male group gathered near the exit. "Is she still a missionary?" asked someone. "Well, I've always wondered about the Mission Board. Maybe we should hold back our tithes. We could use the money to build more Sunday school rooms," said someone else.

The Ladies' Missionary Society had wrapped the long tables with white paper tablecloths and set them with plain cups, small plates, knives and spoons. Dishes of homemade dill pickles sat ready in the refrigerator and platters of fluffy zwieback buns and rhubarb



Schwester Wiens regularly foresaw church splits,  
and she had predicted the Great Flood of 1950  
an entire year  
before the Red River spilled  
over its banks.

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platz were on the counter, covered with large tea towels. Mother motioned me to the kitchen and told Julie and me to put the little bowls of sugar cubes on each table.

"Why would she do this now?" asked one of the Ladies' Aid members. I asked for a drink of water so I could linger.

"Why did the pastor let them in for the funeral?" asked one woman, rubbing her hands on her gingham apron. "He's a Christian," said the pastor's wife. I never heard Mrs. Neufeld say anything before. She was just the pastor's wife, who sat near the front of the sanctuary every Sunday morning. "Well, you know what I mean," said the woman. I didn't know. Was Mrs. Neufeld saying her husband was a Christian or the man from India was a Christian? Rev. Neufeld had conducted the service so he must have thought everything was in order. I know Father and Mother were proud the Mission Board had sent someone from our local congregation—it was almost as though we ourselves were in India.

"How come we didn't know and we have been supporting her all these years?" asked one woman who was cutting the butter into squares. "This kind of relationship can't last. The Mission Board should know that."

"How could she bring him to her own mother's funeral? Schwester Wiens treated her like a daughter," said the gingham apron.

Mother gave me a look and I knew it was time for Julie and me to get out of the kitchen with the bowls of sugar cubes. We had just finished setting out the sugar when the double doors underneath the red exit bulb pushed open. There stood Anne. By her side were the Indian man and the pastor.

The buzzing basement came to a standstill. No one moved, no one talked. This was our missionary. This was the woman for whom members had prayed for over 15 years. This was the adopted daughter of Schwester Wiens, who had prophesied the Messiah

would return in her lifetime and begin the 1000-year reign of peace and justice. In the formality of the funeral service, the staring had not been noticeable.

The minute hand on the industrial-size clock on the wall near the kitchen jumped along the small black lines between the numbers several times, and still no one moved. Finally Rev. Neufeld broke the spell, "When everyone is seated," he announced, "I'll pray so we can start the meal."

Rev. Neufeld escorted Anne and the Indian man to the head table and motioned to the kitchen for his wife to join them. Others slowly took their seats, leaving a wide berth of empty tables surrounding the head table. Cousin Julie and I easily found a seat where we could get a close-up view of Anne and her man. "Maybe we're not supposed to sit here," I said. We were the only ones at the table. "Nah," said Julie, "if someone wants us to move, they'll have to come and tell us."

After Rev. Neufeld finished his prayer, he readjusted the microphone. "Thank you for your presence," said the Indian man. He spoke slowly and with what sounded like a British accent. "One person's loss is everyone's loss. We are each other's mother, each other's child, each other's brother and sister."

The basement buzzed again. Maybe people at the other tables were saying, "Please pass the zwieback," but I think they were probably asking each other what Julie asked me, "How can one person be a sister and mother and child and brother all at the same time?"

"I don't know, Julie. Maybe it's like a parable," I said.

"Or maybe he doesn't know English very well and he got nervous talking in front of so many people," said Julie.

I kept my eyes on the head table. The Indian man put four lumps of sugar in his tea and held the cream pitcher over his cup for a long time. He ate zwieback; two, in fact. I wasn't sure he would like our food. Anne wasn't eating anything, but the Indian man



No one  
had come to the head table  
to shake Anne's hand  
or meet  
the man from India.

gently broke open the double-decker bun, buttered it, put a slice of cheese on it, and placed it on Anne's plate.

He and the pastor exchanged a few words, so he must have known English pretty well because Rev. Neufeld had never been to India. Anne barely talked at all. She dabbed her eyes a few times and I saw the Indian man take a handkerchief from his suit pocket and press it in her hand.

I thought of the day Julie, her friend Mark, and I had seen Anne three years ago. When we boarded the bus, Mark had held out his Old Dutch potato chip bag and then snatched it out of Julie's reach. I looked up from slipping my quarter in the fare box to see the entire bag of chips flip over and spill across the aisle of the bus. Mark ground the scattered chips into the floor with his heel. A woman in an old-fashioned coat and an oversize wool cap, stared at the chips, and it looked like she might slip out of her seat to pick up each crushed crumb. She bit her lip and stared out the window. That is when I noticed the buck teeth.

I leaned toward her. "Hello. Are you Anne Wiens?" She nodded. "Welcome to Winnipeg," I said for lack of anything better that came to my mind. The years of repeating the name of Anne Wiens welled up in me. I wanted to say something to bridge the gap between India and Winnipeg, but no words came out of my mouth. The bus jerked to a stop and Julie had yelled, "What are you waiting for? This is our stop."

I looked again at Anne and the man from India at the next table in our church basement. Members of the Ladies' Society had already been around twice, offering tea and coffee. Some people were scraping their chairs, making moves towards leaving. No one had come to the head table to shake Anne's hand or meet the man from India.

"Julie, I think we should go and talk to Anne," I said. "Why would we do that?" asked Julie.

"Well, we could find out what his name is," I said.

Julie grabbed another zwieback before a Ladies' Aid member whisked the plate of buns off the table.

"Do you think the Messiah could come from India?" I asked.

"You think that little guy is the Messiah?" Julie wiped the zwieback crumbs from around her mouth with the back of her hand.

"Well hardly anyone recognized Jesus the first time he came," I said.

"Are you crazy?" said Julie. "Even if I might believe that stuff, which I don't, Schwester Wiens said he was coming in the clouds. You told me that yourself after you talked to her, remember? This guy arrived after Schwester Wiens died. Use your head."

"He flew here. That's like coming through the clouds. And Schwester Wiens did predict the Great Flood, even though she was a year early. Sometimes her timing was off, but some things are right, even if the details are wrong. Like remember, you told me in grade one that a woman gets pregnant when the guy gives her an egg and it cracks open in her stomach. You were partly right. There's an egg involved," I said.

"I can't believe you're saying this," said Julie. "Come on, let's go talk to Mark and his friends." She pointed toward the hallway where groups of teenage boys were circling.

"Go ahead," I said. "I'll catch up." I felt I had to say something to Anne Wiens, our missionary. But as I pushed back my chair, Anne and the Indian man did the same. They got up, shook hands with the pastor and disappeared quickly through the double doors under the red exit sign. I sat back down on my chair and watched the doors close.

*Dorothy Friesen is a writer from Chicago, Illinois.*



Festival Quarterly was first published in the Spring of 1974. In celebration of our 20 years of publication, we will reprint one article from an earlier FQ in each issue of our 20th anniversary year.

# Are Mennonites Choosing The Wrong Kind of Leaders?

by Arnold Cressman

If you are serving on a major churchwide board or committee you owe it to the church to ask yourself a few serious questions: "Am I perceived to be the kind of person who would affirm, with a hand on the *Mennonite Yearbook*, to (1) say nothing nasty about the Board of Missions, (2) read the obituaries in the *Gospel Herald* regularly, and (3) "rock no boats" on the floor of the General Assembly after an "issue" has been "prioritized" for calm and deliberate discussion there? (4) Was I selected to do maintenance—or to provide vision? The Mennonite denomination, as institutions are prone to do, is presently moving into a sociological maintenance phase. And be aware that prophetic vision is seldom recognized or appreciated during an institution's maintenance phase.

Dreams are not often recognized as a word from the Lord. Our Josephs are seen as unrealistic visionaries, people with a handicap, organizationally inept, hardly the kind of persons we'd want on a committee to set the salary policy for church workers. Why? Have we, to eliminate the risks, made eunuchs of the prophets? Yet we must know that "where there is no vision, the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18, KJV), and when the prophets are depreciated, creeping institutionalism quickly fills the gap.

Can we image a Martin Luther King appearing on the capitol steps before a crowd of people to confess, ashamedly, that in spite of his better judgment, he did, in fact, have a dream? No, it is the dreamers, the responsible Josephs, who save us from the drought of our pusillanimous conformity. It is the dreamers who can show us a clear picture of what God says we can become. But we must let them.

Better, we should encourage potential dreamers to come out of the closet and make their gifts available to the church.

Some day at General Assembly we may listen to something akin to political campaigning, in the very best sense of that word. We will hear two or three persons, women or men, articulate a vision for the church. They will say, "If elected, I will do my best to lead the church toward these specific denominational dreams." Then the rest of us will decide which program is most surely what God intends and will choose our leaders on that basis. As it is, we have little idea what the dreams of our likely leaders are or whether, indeed, they have any. Candidates are expected to appear exceedingly humble. If they say anything at all before the election it is to mumble about how unworthy they are. Thus we get persons elected who have promised nothing, intend little, and dream mostly about "peace in our time."

Usually we settle for benevolent maintenance, satisfied that deficits will not increase by much until the next election.

An institution in a maintenance phase develops immense respect for the gift of management and its co-partner, organization. In our kind of world, the church certainly needs great strength in both of these efforts. But can't we add to the mix the prophetic gift as well? Jesus had a wonderful opportunity to organize his program. He could have made each disciple the head of a "commission" with instructions to meet semi-annually, if budgets permitted. Instead he gave his disciples an easy organizational yoke and a powerful dream. The Kingdom of God was coming! We tend to depreciate our dreamers and lionize our organizers.

A corollary to the leadership question is the problem of matching tasks with the right set of gifts. Here we have often been horribly unmerciful. Why do we put preachers in a position where they must make business and financial judgments for the church far beyond their experience and competence? It is as if we expected business expertise to be endowed at the moment of ordination.

It is worse when ordained persons actually begin to believe that business expertise came with ordination, although it did not. These are the persons who never think of calling in good business resource persons so that they can make wise decisions.

Business and economic illiteracy is no sin. The sin is in putting unequipped people in places where they must make major economic judgments. It is not that we are asking too much from preachers; it is rather that we are asking them, sometimes, to exercise gifts they do not have. Fortunately the gifts of businesspersons are being recognized more often than they were. We must begin fishing in the whole pond for our leaders. Otherwise we will deprive ourselves of some deep-water catches that would greatly enrich the church. There are businesspersons, dreamers, passionate people, women and men, who would easily and willingly help us out of our maintenance mode. The alternative is too disquieting to dwell on.

*When he wrote this article, Arnold Cressman, Mt. Pleasant, Pennsylvania, worked with programming at the Laurelville Mennonite Church Center. He is co-founder of Tour-Magination.*

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## BORDERS

# When the Cold War Heated Up by Peter J. Dyck

Borders or boundaries can be a real hassle. I've crossed them in less than a minute, and I've also been detained for hours. But imagine being held for 52 hours!

The time was 1949 and the country was Poland. Meet our five intrepid Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) volunteers with their convoy of three vehicles—a jeep, a truck, and a station wagon. Their work in Poland was over—not finished—because the government was pushing all the volunteer agencies out of the country. “We can take care of our own needs, thank you” was the explanation they received.

The real reason for wanting Americans out of Poland, however, was political. The Cold War was heating up. Behind the scenes was the Soviet Union. As many as 40 MCC volunteers had served in Poland. This is the story of the last five arriving at the border. Alton Horst remembers:

“Our relief supplies were to be left with the Ministry of Welfare and other Polish organizations. They would not extend our visas. We had to get out. We left Warsaw on Saturday, drove all night, and got to the border on Sunday afternoon, May 15, the day our visas expired.

“The officials informed us that we were not allowed to take undeveloped film out of the country, so we had to open our cameras and surrender our films. Then we had to unload all three vehicles. They began to inspect the baggage. Even the spare tires, gasoline cans, and antifreeze. Everything that was loose had to be unloaded. Everything had to be opened and all contents had to be removed. Finally, they did a body search.

“By now it was midnight. They asked me to turn around, load all the files onto one vehicle, and go back to the nearest town. A police car with three security agents led the way. At 4 a.m. we arrived at the Security Headquarters where we were ushered into a room and waited until 10 a.m. An officer questioned us briefly but disappeared again.

“At noon we were brought into another room where a number of officials were inspecting our stuff. Now and then they asked us to explain a letter or a photograph.

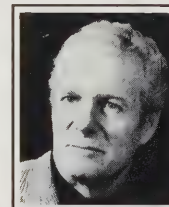
“At 2 o'clock they escorted us to a restaurant. We were famished, not having eaten for 24 hours. Then they took us to a hotel and for the first time left us alone. Promptly the next morning they were there, taking us back to police headquarters. By now they had sorted through everything and organized it into stacks labeled A, B, C, D, etc. Then they asked us to number all pages. We got so tired we could hardly keep our eyes open anymore. We begged them to let us sleep, but they refused.

“Then they drew up an official document listing everything they had confiscated and asked us to sign it. We said we would, on condition that they give us a copy. They refused. We begged and we insisted. They responded, ‘Sign here.’ We were so exhausted and frustrated that we finally signed the document. Then they walked us to the door and said we could go. Just like that.

“When we got to the Czech border, the officials were all smiles. They had seen our vehicles held up for three days and were sorry for us. At least that's the impression we got.

“Then they began telling us about the many people who were fleeing Czechoslovakia. They were tightening border security to keep their people from *leaving!*”

The Poles had their reasons for making passage difficult at their borders, and the Czechs had their own reasons. The differences had become nearly immaterial to those of us who simply needed to pass through!



*Peter J. Dyck has spent a rich life shuttling refugees to new homelands, overseeing relief programs, and telling wise and witty stories. He and his wife, Elfrieda, live in Akron, PA.*



• *Silent Labourers* is written by **Doris Dube** and published by Matopo Book Centre, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. It is a collection of stories about Zimbabwean and Zambian Brethren in Christ (BIC) women who labored tirelessly and often anonymously in their churches and communities. From the story of Maria Tshuma, who once worked out a peaceful settlement between two high-ranking BIC churchmen locked in a dispute, to the story of Ethel Sibanda, a much sought after public speaker, the women of Doris Dube's book are a testament to the strength of womanhood in Christian community. To obtain copies of the book, write to Baptist Publishing House, Box 8241, Belmont, Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.

• Mennonites who have a lifelong love affair with Low German will be interested in *The Story of Low German and Plautdietsch: Tracing a Language Across the Globe* by **Reuben Epp**. This well researched volume addresses many of the questions and misconceptions people have about this language of some of our foremothers and forefathers. Epp points out that Low German was recognized and widely used long before English. Published by Reader's Press, Hillsboro, Kansas.

• In a new title from Herald Press, *Family Violence: The Compassionate Church Responds*, **Melissa A. Miller** examines the difficult questions of congregational response to internal violence. Miller guides readers through such concerns as survivors' healing, power dynamics, and faith questions. A resource for laypeople and discussion groups as well as church leaders.

• In *Traces of Treasure: Quest for God in the Commonplace*, **Joanne Lehman** reflects on common experiences, finding in each a spiritual dimension. After attending the auction of her grandparents' things, cycling with friends, or buying groceries, she records her impressions and searches for spiritual meaning. Published by Herald Press.

• *Mennonot* is an opinion/arts newsletter for "Mennonites on the margins." The editors, **Sheri Hostetler** and **Steve Mullet**, grew up in the

middle of the world's largest Amish and Mennonite community, Holmes County, Ohio. The purpose of their newsletter is to provide a forum for ideas and discussion not normally found in other Mennonite publications. Three to four issues a year are planned.

• *Family, Church, and Market: A Mennonite Community in the Old and the New Worlds, 1850-1930* by **Royden K. Loewen** focuses on the efforts of the *Kleine Gemeinde* Mennonites who came from Russia to the Plains states and provinces to "safeguard what it saw as the essence of life in an increasingly urban, industrial society." Loewen interprets the "lived experiences" of this denomination. Published by University of Toronto Press.

• **Elaine Sommers Rich** has edited *Walking Together in Faith, The Central District 1957-1990*. An updated history of the Central District Conference (GC), the book has fourteen chapters by various writers, including **Steven R. Estes**, **Mark Weidner**, **J. Howard Kauffman**, **Cornelius J. Dyck**, and **Donna Lehman**. For more information, write to Central District Conference, 103 W. Elm St., Bluffton, OH 45817.

• The relationships between Baptists and Mennonite Brethren provide the context for *Mennonites and Baptists—A Continuing Conversation*, edited by **Paul Toews**. Eight of the eleven articles are historical, one examines Baptist interpretations of Anabaptist history, and two are theological. Commissioned by the Historical Commission of the General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, the study aims to promote ecumenical dialogue and to understand how Baptist influence has affected the Mennonite Brethren Church. Published by Kindred Press.

• **Lois Tschetter Hjelmstad** is the author of *Fine Black Lines: Reflections on Facing Cancer, Fear and Loneliness*. Through journal entries, poetry, and reflective essays, Hjelmstad captures the many emotions of one woman facing the challenges and losses of breast cancer. Published by Mulberry Hill Press, Englewood, Colorado.

• Evangel Publishing House, Nappanee, Indiana, recently published *A Wing and a Prayer* by **Paul Hostetler**. From "Teachers Who Touched My Life" to "All I Know About Women" to "Convention Fun and Folly," this collection gathers incidents and observations from Hostetler's own life and experiences.

• **Samuel L. Horst** wrote one of the articles in the *Encyclopedia of the Confederacy*, published in 1993 by Simon and Schuster. Horst's entry deals with the Mennonite experience in the Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War. He tells the story of Mennonites who were opposed both to slavery and to participating in the war which raged over their farmsteads and around their homes. Horst is professor emeritus of history at Eastern Mennonite College.

• Translated from German by **Al Reimer** and **John B. Toews**, *The Molotschna Settlement* by **Heinrich Goerz** was published jointly by Canadian Mennonite Bible College and Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society in 1993 as one of the Echo Historical Series works. Himself a member of the Molotschna community, Goerz wrote, "I have taken pains to give a continuous, systematic account of the history of Molotschna in simple, comprehensible language," in his 1950 foreword to the book. The Molotschna Settlement was first published by Echo Verlag, Steinbach, Manitoba, in 1950.

• A collection of true stories of conscientious objectors who served in the forest service during World War II has been self-published by **Asa Mundell**, Beaverton, Oregon. *Static Lines and Canopies: Stories from the Smoke-Jumpers of 1943-45 Civil Public Service Camp, Missoula, Montana* is of particular interest to those who served in Civilian Public Service.

• "Scapegoats, the Bible, and Criminal Justice: Interacting with **Rene Girard**" is the latest paper in the New Perspectives on Crime and Justice Series. Written by **Vern Redekop**, it is available from Mennonite Central Committee.



**Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism**, Leo Driedger and Donald B. Kraybill. Herald Press, 1994. 344 pages, \$14.95.

**Reviewed by Merle Good**

If one has reservations about a book, but one of the authors is a good friend, how does one review that book?

Gingerly, I guess.

*Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism* attempts to chart the historical development of the changes in Mennonite attitudes toward peacemaking. The writers selected various tables and graphs from *The Mennonite Mosaic* study to verify the trends they see.

The authors are unabashedly enthused about their belief that this book documents "the dramatic shift among Mennonites from passive non-resistance to active participation in the political order." This premise is repeated over and over throughout the book. At times the study seems more intent on proof-texting the premise than in looking at the whole picture.

This reader was uncomfortable with the breathless, jazzy quality of the language. At times the book reads more like a tract, a series of victory speeches for activists, a celebration of the destruction of nonresistance. One winces when liberals throughout the book are called "forward-looking," "courageous," and "faithful," while more communally-oriented Mennonites are labelled as "critical," "reluctant," and "entrenched." All in a sort of breezy, flippant socio-chat.

We are left with some difficult questions:

1. Do the authors realize how much their prejudices show?
2. Has the change from the "meek and mild" to modern activists been as "sweeping" and "dramatic" as the authors contend?
3. Why is the term "Anabaptist" reserved for causes aligned with the political left? All others are called "Fundamentalists." Why not call conserving, Mennonite positions "Anabaptist" and label the modernist sympathizers as "Liberal/New Age"? Do such stark categories prove anything at all?
4. The book asserts repeatedly that nonresistance and the two-kingdom view have "crumbled." While there may be some validity to their enthusiasm, it is interesting to note that in

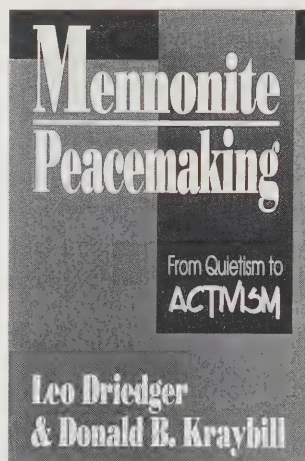


Table 4-2 of *The Mennonite Mosaic*, 92% of Mennonites appear to subscribe to the two-kingdom view. Why is this question not part of the peacemaking index?

5. The outcome of any study is heavily influenced by the categories, the questions, the wording, and the interpretation. Does this study give us an accurate barometer on Mennonite peacemaking? It's difficult to be sure. Campaign speeches intersperse data that seems partial. Dualisms are established to disprove Mennonite dualism. Increased political involvement is praised as a vindication of progressives, but the fact that that involvement is largely conservative is barely noted.

6. And what about abortion? Why is it excluded from the peacemaking index? If Mennonites oppose owning stock in companies producing war goods, they score high on the peacemaking index. If they oppose abortion as the destruction of life, it doesn't count. It hardly takes a brilliant person to see why many Mennonites in the pew feel as though the political/theological left has tried to hijack both the peacemaking self-description and the blessing of "Anabaptist" for themselves.

Studies are subjective. One wishes for less bias and more open-mindedness on such an important aspect of our faith-life.

Merle Good is publisher for Festival Quarterly and for Good Books.

**FQ price—\$11.96**  
(Regular price—\$14.95)

**Doing Good Better!**, Edgar Stoesz and Chester Raber. Good Books, 1994. 150 pages, \$9.95.

**Reviewed by Wally Kroeker**

The U.S. has more than a million nonprofit organizations but many are serious under-achievers, say Edgar Stoesz and Chester Raber. Too often the initial vision dims, stagnation sets in, and great effort is poured into administering second-rate ideas.

That's sad, say Stoesz and Raber. Nonprofits can be an enormous force for good. They enable us to do together what none could do alone. They are "a part of God's ongoing work of creation."

Here's a useful (and readable) "board member handbook" that could breathe new life into tired organizations. It's full of ways to monitor and improve board performance so that nonprofits can become vital organisms: How should boards operate? What makes them sick? How can they get better? How can a nonprofit board stay young at heart?

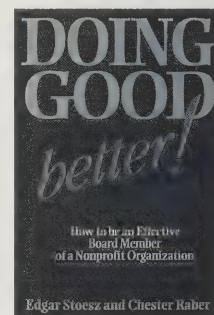
There's plenty of nuts-and-bolts advice on preparing agendas, running good meetings, and leading a "mental walkabout" (brainstorming). The authors expose landmines that can explode a board's best intentions, from the perils of meddling to the risk of liability. They also offer counsel on how long you should serve and how to "leave right" when your time is up.

Concluding "exhibits" include a checklist for orienting new members, job descriptions for various board functions, and tools to appraise the performance of the CEO as well as the board itself.

If you're on a nonprofit board, buy this book. Next time you're stuck in a board meeting that drags, pull it out and see what went wrong.

Wally Kroeker, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is editor of *The Marketplace* a publication of Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA).

**FQ price—7.96**  
(Regular price—9.95)





**A Pilgrimage of Faith, The Mennonite Brethren Church in Russia and North America, 1860-1990**, J.B. Toews. Kindred Press, 1993. 376 pages, \$11.95.

Reviewed by Levi Miller

On one level this book is a history of the Mennonite Brethren (MB) Church with its beginnings as a renewal movement within the Mennonite church in Russia in the 1860s. From its humble birth in the Ukraine, the MBs have grown to 44,000 members in the U.S. and Canada. Membership outside North America, thanks to an active mission program, is even larger. J.B. Toews tells the story of their growth, transitions, and encounters with modernity.

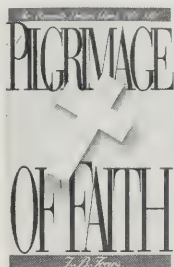
On another level, it is old Jacob toward the end of his life calling his children together, naming them, and blessing them. In fact, a key word which appears throughout this book is identity, as in identity crisis. The MB children of Israel are losing their identity of faith and obedience.

This is not conscious "apostasy" says Toews; it is rather the well-intentioned efforts of a Christian people reaching out in evangelism and removing boundaries for church growth. Toews seems to think MBs were not equipped to deal with modernity. He calls for repentance and a return to Anabaptist Mennonite biblical Christianity. It is finally a "spiritual crisis," he says.

Non-MB Mennonites, many of whom have their own identity losses, can learn much from this book. They can learn the social history of a related denomination and the faith history of how the most urbanized of North American Mennonite churches is struggling to be, in biblical parlance, "in but not of the world."

Levi Miller, Scottdale, Pennsylvania is director of the Congregational Literature Division of the Mennonite Publishing House.

**FQ price—\$9.56**  
(Regular price—\$11.95)



**Amos and Susie: An Amish Story**, Merle Good, illustrated by Cheryl Benner. Good Books, 1993. 24 pages, \$4.95, paperback; \$12.95, hardcover.

Reviewed by Joanne Ranck Dirks

Here is a child's-eye view of what it is like being Amish. In this picture book it means having a playmate and many occasions for get-togethers.

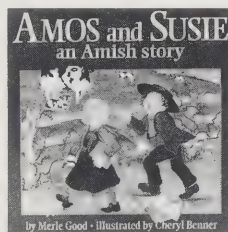
Rhymed couplets describe the full-page illustrations as the book takes children and their adult readers through the year in an Amish family. In winter Amos and Susie ice-skate and Susie goes to a quilting. In spring they help plant garden and have their school picnic. Summer is the time to harvest and can peaches. Amos and Susie attend a wedding in November, and Amos learns his lines for the school program in December. At the end of the book, there is a fuller description of activities month by month within the Amish community.

For my children the year wasn't long enough. Each picture looked like something they'd like to do. Which makes me think growing up Amish would be fun.

Cheryl Benner's illustrations are happy and full of energy. And with few, but well chosen words, Merle Good's rhymed couplets celebrate the joy of being part of a family and community. The brief text also gives children and grown-ups time to explore the pictures together. I'd recommend trying this book on toddlers who love looking at pictures and listening to the music of rhyme.

Joanne Ranck Dirks, Akron, Pennsylvania, is mother to three children who love when she reads to them.

**FQ price—\$ 3.96, paperback;**  
**\$10.36, hardcover**  
(Regular price—4.95, paperback;  
12.95, hardcover)



**A Mennonite Woman's Life**, photographs by Ruth Hershey (1895-1990), text by Phyllis Pellman Good. Good Books, 1993. 91 pages, \$11.95.

Reviewed by Eve B. MacMaster

When it was still a novelty, a camera was often called a "magic box." For Ed Huddle, a box stuffed full of little envelopes containing photographic negatives proved to be, like the camera that took the photographs, an instrument of magic. When Huddle, a professional photographer himself, enlarged his grandmother's pictures, he "was suddenly able to understand Grandma Hershey with new eyes."

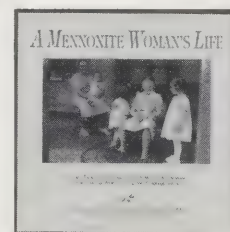
The result is a window into the world of Lancaster County farm women of two generations ago. It was a world of unending childcare and housework where family visits and church provided the only social life and recreation. Ruth Hershey escaped from that world through her little Kodak box camera, literally disappearing "into a wedge of a closet under the front steps in the hallway to develop her own film in complete darkness."

Out of that darkness came the enlightening record of a marriage, a family, and a community as Ruth's magic box captured her world for our understanding. Among those she photographed were Mennonite "girl crowds," some passing tramps, a group of plain but fashion-conscious maidens, Fresh Air children, and Mennonite men enjoying Sunday afternoon cigars.

An interpretive essay by Phyllis Pellman Good provides historical and sociological context, as well as family stories about Ruth Hershey and her magic box.

Eve MacMaster is the author of the Story Bible Series and editor of Voice, the monthly publication of the Women's Missionary and Service Commission of the Mennonite Church.

**FQ price—\$9.56**  
(Regular price—\$11.95)





**Today Pop Goes Home**, a play by Merle Good. Good Books, 1993. 93 pages, \$6.95.

Reviewed by John J. Miller

*Today Pop Goes Home* is a play written a number of years ago by Merle Good. At one point I played the role of Charles. Reading the script again was refreshing. Merle has a sensitivity to the theater which makes his pieces very believable. His sense of timing for the stage is outstanding.

*Pop* is the story of taking care of our aging relatives. It is also a story about relationships within the family, about caring and trust. It is the story of the rearrangement of everything we work so hard to make dear: the land, loved ones, jobs and family.

Charles Snively is a widower living with his son Lewis, his wife Esther, and their family on the farm where he had been born. Charles continues to get reminders of his age and his inability to cope. Esther has had so many tensions in her life and Charles only adds to them.

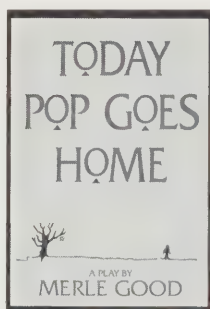
Lewis decides to leave his job, sell the farm to a developer, and send Charles to "Golden Hills." Lewis's siblings think he is brazen and uncaring, but do nothing to help.

Since the time I performed in *Pop*, my family has had to decide what would be best for my father. And I hear the story repeated frequently. *Today Pop Goes Home* is timely.

And now in this form you have a very usable script. One only hopes Merle will consider publishing all his plays.

John J. Miller teaches music at Lancaster Mennonite High School.

**FQ Price—\$5.56**  
(Regular price—6.95)



**Colossians, Philemon** (Believers Church Bible Commentary Vol. 4), Ernest Martin. Herald Press, 1993. 341 pages, \$17.95.

Reviewed by Charlotte Holsopple Glick

Pastors frequently seek resources for Bible studies, sermon preparation, and ethical discernment. Biblical students look for materials that relate systematically and thoroughly to the text. Social scientists encourage us to assess scriptural analysis for adequate attention given to the cultural, social, and economic dynamic of the society in which the material was written. Leaders in local communities of the Believers Church tradition often evaluate commentaries from the perspective of peace and social justice awareness. Readers of scripture desire to be engaged by interpretive remarks that span the centuries and offer insights into ways to be faithful in today's complex environment.

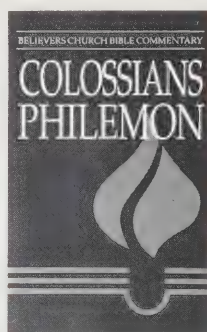
Ernest Martin appears to have had all these "users" in mind as he weaves together the themes and the tone of the letters written to Colossians and Philemon.

The supremacy and sufficiency of the cosmic Christ in Colossians and "the power of the gospel to transform messed up relationships" in Philemon are the predominant themes highlighted by the author.

Martin successfully shows the relationship of the biblical text to everyday experiences through his interpretive remarks, but more explicitly through carefully constructed outlines, diagrams, and sketches of the text.

Charlotte Holsopple Glick is Conference Regional Minister of Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference.

**FQ price—\$14.36**  
(Regular price—17.95)



**Acts** (Believers Church Bible Commentary Vol. 5), Chalmer E. Faw. Herald Press, 1993. 335 pages, \$17.95.

Reviewed by Wilma Ann Bailey

Chalmer E. Faw, a missionary and former professor of New Testament at Bethany Theological Seminary, has written a fine, readable, conservative layperson's commentary on the book of Acts.

The commentary follows the pattern set for the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series. After a foreword from the editors and a brief author's preface, there is a very helpful section providing background material on the nature of the book, author, date, purpose, sources, literary characteristics, the use of the narrative form, particular interests, the greatest emphasis, the plan and outline, and how to use the commentary.

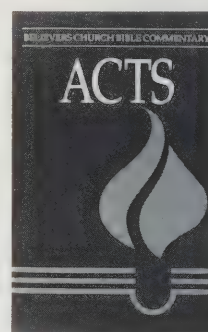
Acts is then divided by chapter and verse into twelve parts, and commentary is provided for verses in the order found in the biblical book. The commentary on the text is followed by a complete outline of the book, a series of essays that study particular issues in greater depth (such as the Greek text of Acts, the Holy Spirit, and speaking in tongues), maps, a bibliography, and suggested resources for further study.

Faw does not ignore difficult questions such as whether Judas hung himself or whether Paul did (Acts 9:26-28) or did not (Galatians 1:18-23) meet with the apostles following his conversion. However, he usually tries to harmonize (perhaps too facilely) varying accounts of the same incident.

The commentary is enriched by Faw's insight, anecdotes gleaned from Anabaptist history, and his experience on the mission field.

Wilma Ann Bailey is Assistant Professor of Old Testament at Messiah College.

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# Shoofly Mystery Solved

## by David W. Augsburg

**Abstract:** History is mystery. Puzzles, problems, curiosities, and conundrums abound. This monograph at last resolves the cultural-theological puzzle of the origin and name of the essential Anabaptist confection, the Shoofly Pie.

For centuries, a perplexing problem has plagued historiographers puzzling over their morning piece of shoofly pie. What is its origin? What is the meaning of its name? Why is it traditionally served at breakfast? What is the significance of its covering of crumbs? At last these questions can be answered satisfactorily.

The classic and often cited insect-trap hypothesis can now be conclusively refuted. The preposterous theory that this mouth-watering pie was not meant to be eaten but served only as a decoy, a lure to attract flies from better baked goods (H.S. Wenger, 1922; J.C. Bender, 1945) is theologically indefensible since it involves both deceit and waste. Besides, the crumb surface protects the sweet and sticky interior. The answer is not found through such rational theories of humble pie, but in historical reality.

It all began with Menno (Menno Simons 1496-1561). Early on a Sunday, Menno was preaching to a forbidden assembly of Anabaptists meeting in a barn. His platform/pulpit was an upended hogshead of molasses. The men of the congregation stood protectively around the walls. The women sat, as was customary, in the center surrounding the preacher. An interrupting shout from an alert scout warned them of the sheriff and posse without. In his haste to leap down and escape, Menno accidentally kicked in the end of the hogshead and sank to his knees in the gooey stuff. Seeing that he would leave a telltale trail or be glued to the floorboards, the men blocked entry while the women all came forward and each took a mouthful of molasses from his shoes and leggings. When the last lick left him clean, the word was exultantly echoed across the crowd. "His shoes are free! His shoes are free!"

(German: *Schuh frei*; Dutch: *Schoen vrij*) In celebration of Menno's escape, a molasses pie, to be eaten on Sunday mornings and covered with crumbs to symbolize shaking the dust off his feet as he left the inhospitable territory, was instituted as sacred ritual. It was named *Schuh Frei Pie*. We eat it in



drawing by Cheryl Benner

remembrance of Menno and of his flying to safety. The translation into English has altered the pronunciation (only the Japanese and Korean Mennonites say it correctly), but the meaning is unmistakable. It is a shout of victory, a cheer of pride and commendation to the resourceful women of this radical movement, and a cry of gratitude for the gift of tongues.

Dutch Mennonites cite this well-known historical account in explana-

tion of the proverbial Mennonite sweet tooth (which is virtually a tusk in most) and infer genetic transmission of a molasses obsession which broadened to include all candies (I.B. Horst, 1959). The three greatest Dutch chocolate producers—Drooste, ver Kade, van Houten—are all Mennonite. The North American Mennonites produced the number one chocolatier—Hershey (Gleysteen, 1993).

"Culture is the form; theology is the content," Paul Tillich taught. Shoofly pie is the form; *Schuh frei pie* is the content.

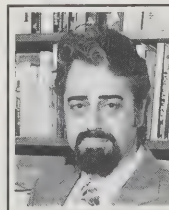
The celebration of deliverance, of safety from persecution, is the theological reality beyond the recipe.

This historical breakthrough opens further hypotheses for research. What is the relationship of this molasses event to the practice of footwashing in public worship? Were black stockings required for plain dress of women as a replica of Menno's dark molasses leggings? If Mennonite women are genetically sweet-tongued, does this help explain the male fear of allowing them right to the pulpit? What impact on the role of Mennonite men is their task of blocking entry? If we serve seven sweets and seven sours at every meal, what else was on Menno's shoes?

Slowly, slowly as it has been coming, perhaps a new generation of scholars will stick to the molasses mystery.

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David Augsburg has entered the Anabaptist missionary corps by becoming professor of pastoral care and counseling at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.



## Rich Musical Tradition Stays Alive



photo by Jim Bishop

Kenneth Nafziger (left) and Bernard R. Martin, a *Harmonia Sacra* enthusiast and songleader, inspect a copy of the new 25th edition of the *Harmonia Sacra*.

A 25th edition of *The Harmonia Sacra* has been published by Good Books, Intercourse, Pennsylvania. Eastern Mennonite College (EMC) and Seminary contributed funds toward the printing, which was coordinated by James Nelson Gingerich, Goshen, Indiana. Kenneth Nafziger, professor of music at EMC, was among those who assisted Gingerich with revisions on the newest edition. *The Harmonia Sacra* was first released in 1832 by Joseph Funk in Singers Glen, Virginia. Used in most early Mennonite singing schools, it has sold more than 100,000 copies to date.

*Harmonia Sacra* sings are held annually at a number of settings, particularly in the Shenandoah Valley area of Virginia. The 25th edition had its debut appearance at two such singing services held New Year's Day, 1994—one at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary in Elkhart, Indiana, and the other at the 92nd annual *Harmonia Sacra* Sing at Weavers Mennonite Church near Harrisonburg, Virginia.

The latest edition restores the hymnal to its distinctive oblong shape which had been dropped at the release of the 23rd edition in 1972. It contains a preface by well-known church musician Mary Oyer and 470 selections, including about 50 which have not appeared since the earliest editions of the hymn book's existence.

## Mennonite Woman Prepares United Nations Exhibit

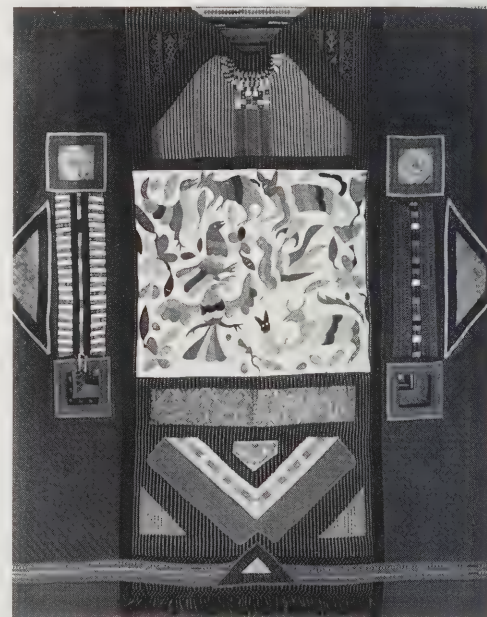
Throughout 1993, Phyllis Ressler, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, joined with Mennonite artists, Dennis Maust and Pat Augsburg, to prepare an exhibit for the United Nations' "International Year of Indigenous People." Ressler had done other exhibits for the UN, typically using only photos and text. She approached the United Nations Center for Human Rights with the idea to invite members of indigenous groups from all over the world to submit actual fiber works for the exhibit.

Ressler, who had also worked for SELFHELP Crafts of the World, remembers the skepticism which greeted her idea. "How can you do this? Won't it be impossible to have a representative sampling from the more than 5000 such groups?"

Because of SELFHELP's extensive connections, Ressler felt it would be possible, so she said, "Watch us." Once she had the green light, it became a matter of "calling old friends" and making lots of contacts looking for funding. Alternative Trade Organizations, such as SELFHELP, provided majority funding. Other sources included UNESCO in Paris and the Canadian consulate in New York.

Once the 47 pieces representing 33 indigenous groups from every continent in the world were collected, the task of putting together an exhibit remained. Maust, Augsburg, and Ressler, along with Mao Moua, a Hmong craftswoman who lives near Lancaster, created four 8' x 8' montages. The exhibit, which also included 70-some photographs and lots of text, was on display at the United Nations from October 14, 1993 through the end of January, 1994.

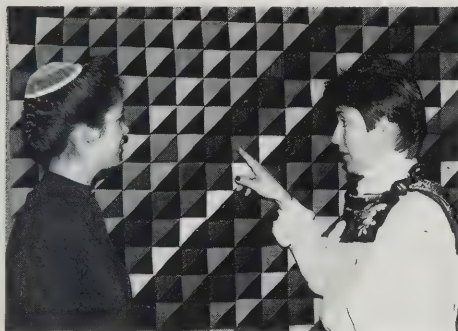
After declaring the 1990s "The Decade of Indigenous People," the UN recommended Ressler's project become a traveling exhibition. The UN redid the exhibit at its expense, reducing the panels so they could travel with the montages. "Common Threads" is being scheduled to appear in universities, Alternative Trade Organizations, and various other sites around the world.—LS



Detail of one 8' x 8' montage.

photo by Louise Stoltzfus





*Rachel T. Pellman, curator of The People's Place Quilt Museum, discusses one of the antique Amish quilts with Lucille Metzler, Manager of The Old Country Store.*

## New Exhibition of Antique Amish Quilts

A dazzling new exhibition of antique Amish quilts opened at The People's Place Quilt Museum on March 5. "Amish Quilts of the Midwest" features masterpieces from the collection of Bryce and Donna Hamilton. The exhibit showcases 41 antique quilts, including 17 antique crib quilts.

According to Rachel Pellman, curator of the exhibit, Amish quilts of the Midwest have distinctive characteristics that set them apart from the quilts of the large eastern Amish settlement in and around Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. "Midwestern women used solid-colored fabrics from the whole spectrum of available colors, a wide variety of quilt patterns, and most often worked their designs in a series of patchwork blocks. Lancaster women used only half the colors on the color wheel, avoiding bright reds, oranges, and yellows. They tended to piece their quilts with large geometric shapes, often using a central medallion format."

Pellman also noted that midwestern quilters worked primarily with cotton fabrics, while Lancaster Amish women used wool with greater frequency.

Located in the village of Intercourse, Pennsylvania, The People's Place Quilt Museum will host "Amish Quilts of the Midwest" through October 31, 1994.

## New Light on African-Amish Relations

by James and Jeanette Krabill

Late in 1993 the Amish hit the press for the fourth time during the past fifteen years here in Cote d'Ivoire. The first was in 1978 following the Jonestown massacre when several reports appeared featuring America as the breeding ground for religious fanaticism. Various groups were cited as illustrations: Mormons, Children of God, snake-charming Pentecostals, and . . . the Amish.

We got our second glimpse in 1984 when a group of Ivoirian journalists traveled to America to—as they put it—"spy out the Land of Promise." Driving through Pennsylvania, they met the Amish, and later filed their report based on tourist brochures they collected off the streets in Lancaster County.

Most intriguing to these journalists were Amish sorcery practices, particularly the magical signs found painted on buildings throughout the area. One reporter even sketched a few in his notebook to export back to Cote d'Ivoire. In general, though, the journalists were unimpressed with Amish magic, for "these people remain very poor, no tractors, no electricity, lagging far behind the average American farmer." In short, Amish were "fascinating people," but in the end held little "hex appeal," as it were.

In more recent years, the Amish have come to Cote d'Ivoire twice again, in 1986 through the movie *Witness* which filled theaters and review columns for weeks on end, and in 1993, through religious news reporting of the group's historic return visit to Europe in connection with their tricentennial activities.

It is difficult to summarize the wide spectrum of comments concerning the Amish we have encountered here. The most common reaction, however, is simply one of incomprehension or downright disbelief. In an economically developing country, every available ounce of energy is exerted to eradicate the hard realities of rural existence and gain access to the electrical appliances, motorized vehicles, and communication systems which promise a more bearable life for all. When such things as paved roads and

telephones are finally acquired, there is great rejoicing for what are perceived as God's blessings descending graciously from on High.

We experienced this on Christmas Eve in 1984 when electricity first came to our village. The congregation had assembled at 11:30 p.m. for the midnight worship service. The preacher announced his text from John 8:12 where Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness."

Then came the sermon. "Dear friends, for many years we have groped helplessly in darkness. But on this night while the angels sing and God's Light, Jesus, is born into our world, we too will have the light of life, never to walk in darkness again." At that very moment—zappo!—the ceiling lights burst on, for the first time ever in Yocoboue's history. Talk about liturgical drama!

Several weeks later, the 1984 journalists' report appeared in the newspaper, describing Amish life without telephones, cars, and electricity in—"the Land of Promise." We shared the story with a village friend who, in turn, pumped us with questions. "What's with these people, are they sick?" "No." "Crazy?" "No." "Then what is their problem?" he persisted.

It is our impression that, not only Amish, but also most Mennonites working in similar settings to ours, are considered slightly crazy when they arrive on the scene with strange talk of "simple life styles" and "appropriate technology."

Becoming the worldwide People of Light is no easy task. To live faithfully in today's seductive world, we will need light from every source possible. African light. Amish light. But mostly, THE Light, without which we will certainly pass each other in the night.



*James and Jeanette Krabill live with their three children, Matthew, Elisabeth, and Marie-Laure in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.*



photo by Jim Bishop



• **Esther K. Augsburger**, Washington, D.C. inspects the sculpture she created, after its installation adjacent to the new Eastern Mennonite Seminary (EMS) building in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Her bonded marble piece, entitled "Love Essence," stands on the hill next to Martin Chapel. Augsburger's sculpture seeks to "engage people in the seminary's purpose, that of calling persons to the spirit of Christ."

The commission to do the piece resulted from a birthday gift presented to Joseph Lapp, president of Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary. Upon receiving one of the small models of a piece Augsburger installed in 1987 at Union Theological Seminary in Pune, India, Lapp recommended asking her to do a similar piece for EMS. Augsburger also installed a version of this sculpture at ServiceMaster Corporation, Chicago, Illinois, in 1992.

• To help celebrate an important rite of passage in the lives of several young church people (turning 16 and acquiring a driver's license), **Community Mennonite Church, Harrisonburg, Virginia**, held a "litany of dedication" during its January 30 worship service. Jane Peifer led the litany which was written by Duane Sider. After a prayer, Peifer gave each teen a keychain that

also contained a quarter, "To use if you ever need to call home." The litany follows:

**Leader:** You are the ones we meant, when we said that children grow up fast these days. We looked away for a minute, it seemed, and you changed into young adults, taking responsibility for your lives, taking the wheel. We admire you . . . and sometimes wish it was us again.

**Parents:** You are the ones we meant when we wondered how it would feel to have our children grow up, leave the house, follow life, and come home to park the car for the night and get gas money. We love you . . . and are only beginning to know how much.

**Teens:** You are the ones we meant when we hoped someone would travel with us, point us in the right direction, show us the road signs and the ditch, but let us steer. We need you . . . and want you never to forget it.

**All:** Down the road things will change:

**Teens:** Someday we'll have to be responsible for others;

**Parents:** Someday we'll need help and understanding;

**Leader:** Someday we'll be gone, and you'll be in our place.

**All:** Then, let us remember this day: when we pledged to journey together, and trusted God to guide us, keep us safe, and bring us home.

• On January 20, 1994, **Jean Smallwood (Neufeld)** opened a showing of her oil paintings at Mennonite Heritage Centre, Winnipeg, Manitoba. Entitled "Funeral of a Frozen Woman and Other Paintings," the exhibit highlights work inspired by various family photos. Among the old family pictures was one photograph depicting a winter funeral near Plum Coulee, Manitoba, in the early 1900s. Continues through April 20, 1994.

• **C. Norman Kraus**, former professor of religion at Goshen College, has been named a fellow for the 1994 spring semester at the **Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups** at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania.

Kraus will research the international peacemaking efforts of Mennonite Central Committee while in residence. He has written or edited eleven books.

• The National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington D.C. recently exhibited ten of the approximately twenty paintings credited to **Judith Leyster**. A 17th century Dutch artist, Leyster is thought to have been Anabaptist. Many of Leyster's paintings were attributed to Franz Hals and have only been rediscovered in the 20th century. The exhibit which opened in the fall of 1993 closed on April 3, 1994.

• **Hedda Raschka Durnbaugh**, a Church of the Brethren hymnologist and language teacher, attended the 1994 Olympic Winter Games in Lillehammer, Norway. Among the many opening activities held in and around Lillehammer on the eve of the Winter Games was a special service at the Lutheran Church. It featured the singing of the Olympic hymn written by Svein Ellingsen and composed by Egil Hovland. Durnbaugh translated the hymn from Norwegian to English. At the festival service, the hymn was sung in Norwegian, German, and English (using Durnbaugh's translation).

Born in Vienna, Austria, Durnbaugh met her husband, Donald, through his work with Brethren Service in post-World War II Austria. She is a member of the International Fellowship for Research in Hymnology and has a particular interest in Norwegian hymnody. The Durnbaughs live in Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.

• "Yo! Yes?", a children's book written and illustrated by **Christopher Raschka**, was one of five books named Caldecott Honor Books by the American Library Association in February 1994. Each year one children's book receives the Caldecott medal as that year's most distinguished picture book. Several others are then named Honor Books. Raschka is the son of **Donald and Hedda Raschka Durnbaugh**.



**Above the Rim**—Good-hearted story! Inner-city basketball player torn between drugs/quick money and college. (5)

**Angie**—Melodramatic study of an unmarried pregnant girl who's caught between romance and parenthood. So-so. (4)

**Bad Girls**—Four prostitutes in the wild West fight oppression and seek revenge, riding high with bimbo pistols swinging. Cliches with lipstick. (4)

**Blank Check**—A lark of an idea—an 11-year-old is given a blank check and cashes it for a million dollars. Funny, but the fantasy runs thin. (4)

**Blue**—A stunning portrait of a young widow who tries to find a reason to live, a way to be free, after tragedy. Superb. In French. (7)

**Blue Chips**—Fast-paced, gritty drama about college basketball and a coach caught between dishonesty and victory. (5)

**Brainscan**—A brain-dead science fiction horror film about simulating death. A waste. (1)

**8 Seconds**—An engaging film about real-life hero, world champion bull rider Lane Frost. Rodeo as a paradigm of life. Some great moments. (5)

**Fiorile**—Is cowardice hereditary? Do some families always choose personal advantage over sacrifice for others? This Italian film etches a multi-generational saga with poignant if inconsistent strokes. (6)

**Four Weddings and a Funeral**—One of the funniest films in years about a young man who can't make commitments. Very

witty script. (7)

**The Getaway**—A flop. No comparison to the original. Outlaw couple on the run. (2)

**Guarding Tess**—Amusing entertainment. Former First Lady drives her Secret Service agent insane. Superficial, but has some laughs. (4)

**The House of the Spirits**—A sad failure, considering all the talent involved. Tries too much. No unifying glue. A family epic, caught in South American politics. Lacks spirit. (4)

**In the Name of the Father**—As a character study of a young Irish prisoner and his father, the story is superb. But the film is marred by sermonizing. Nevertheless, topnotch. (7)

**Major League II**—Embarrassing sequel about inept baseball players. Wouldn't qualify for the cellar of the farm league. (1)

**My Father, the Hero**—A totally stupid yarn about a father who'll do anything to please his alienated teenage daughter. (1)

**Naked**—Dark, violent study of a drifter in seedy London. Brittle intelligence can't redeem the sewer. (3)

**The Paper**—A delicious romp of a film about 24 hours in the life of the staff of a big city newspaper. Beneath the comedy breathe genuine struggles to maintain a marriage, save the paper, and cling to a sense of ethics. Superb entertainment. (8)

**The Ref**—An odd film about a kidnapper who gets caught in the web of a dysfunctional family. Hilarious. (4)

**Romeo Is Bleeding**—Potboiler about a

gorgeous gangster who seduces a cop, then double-crosses him. Overwrought. (3)

**The Scent of Green Papaya**—Saigon in the 1950s, through the eyes of a poor servant girl. Evocative, with all the details of a middle-class household and its problems. Unforgettable. In Vietnamese. (7)

**Schindler's List**—A masterpiece about a good bad German during the Holocaust. Turgid black-and-white photography combines with crisp characterizations to illumine ambiguous morality in the hellpit of brutality. Only fault is flawed ending. (9)

**Sirens**—Forget it. Bohemian 101 does not make a movie. No story. Only superficial facade. The church tries to censure an artist. (1)

**The Snapper**—A loveable film set in Dublin about an unwed, pregnant 20-year-old daughter and her family's reaction, especially that of her father and her neighbors. Funny and tender. (7)

**Sugar Hill**—An above average story about two brothers in Harlem, born to drugs, now lords themselves. One wants out, the other smells the big deal. Lacks epic dimensions. Thoughtful and engaging. (6)

**Surviving the Game**—A brutal yarn about a sadistic club of hunters who trick human losers to be their prey in the wilderness. (1)

**Threesome**—A superficial look at sexuality among three college students who live together. Pretentious and shallow. (2)

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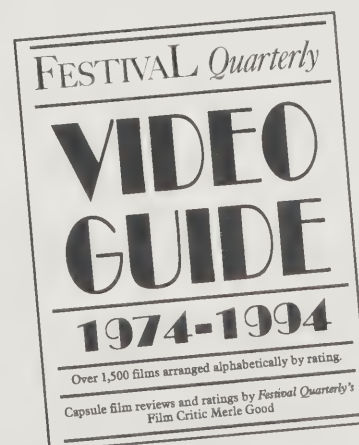
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# You Bet We're Special

## by Katie Funk Wiebe

In a preadolescent boys' Sunday school class in the Hyattsville Mennonite Church in Maryland, the teacher was describing the threefold division of the ancient Jewish tabernacle—an outer court for Gentiles or non-Jews, a second court only for Jews, and the Holy of Holies for special people. "Can you guess who these special people might be?" asked the teacher. "I think it was the Mennonites," replied a seven-year-old boy confidently.

—J. Winfield Fretz  
North Newton, Kansas

Well-known Bible colporteur C.N. Hiebert never liked to preach at the same service with his brother, N.N. Hiebert, especially if the latter was seated on the platform right behind him. The reason? "Everytime I made a grammatical error he'd kick me, and everytime he kicked me, the Holy Spirit left me."

C.N. occasionally joked about young ministers who had received an adequate education but no experience. One youthful Bible school graduate was asked to preach his first sermon in his home church. He began by saying, "The Apostle Paul greets you." Stage fright overcame him, and he repeated the same phrase again. And again. And again. Whereupon his father, who had been proudly expecting a great performance from his son, shouted exasperatedly, in Low German, "Gruess am wadda" (Greet him again). Apparently the Holy Spirit had also left both son and father.

—from C.N. Hiebert Was My Father  
by Esther Horsch

Twenty teens spent five weeks at the University of Wisconsin at Superior studying acid rain with a National Science Foundation Young Scholars program. Represented among them were eight religions—Jewish, Roman Catholic, Muslim, Hindu, Methodist, Mormon, Jehovah's Witness, and Lutheran. On the first day, one girl mentioned that she had nine brothers and sisters. "Oh, are you Mormon?" asked another girl who was herself Mormon. Shocked, the first girl replied, "No, I dress normal!" She thought Mormon was the same as Mennonite, and the only thing she knew about either religion was that Mennonites did not, in her opinion, "dress normal."

—from Newsweek  
September 20, 1993

Several years ago a young Mennonite woman enrolled at Oklahoma State University. She gave her religious preference as Mennonite and asked for a single room. The single rooms were all spoken for, but at the first cancellation the dean of women made an administrative decision and gave Rose the room. She

cautioned the other coeds "to be nice" to this new student, for she would be different. Two months later, one of the girls asked Rose, "Why were we supposed to treat you differently?"

A little girl insisted that her father read *The Three Little Pigs* to her every night. She loved the story and did not tire of it, but he did.

Being a busy and efficient man, he put it on a tape cassette so that she could listen to it while he used his time in other ways. This worked for a while. But one evening she brought the book to him and begged him to read it to her.

"Why don't you just listen to it on the tape recorder?" he wanted to know.

The little girl protested. "But, Daddy, the recorder doesn't have a lap."

—reported by Elaine Sommers Rich in  
Mennonite Weekly Review



Katie Funk Wiebe, author of many books and articles, is a freelance writer living in Wichita, Kansas.

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# Love and Death

## by Richard Cohen

At a family dinner a while back, my cousin Burt and I were talking about the brevity of life. We were eating at my aunt's old place, which is now the apartment of Burt's daughter—a place where I would come to visit as a kid, where Burt had come to meet his in-laws, where relatives now gone would ask me trick questions, where I was known as "Richie," where there used to be kept a tin of marbles for me and my sister to play with when we got bored with adult conversation. This place was like our family Smithsonian—a repository of a few artifacts and many memories. Burt referred to an old relative, now dead, who had come to America from Russia. "I could have been a revolutionary," Burt quoted him as saying, "but I got a cup of tea instead."

I laughed. Burt laughed. He was a new grandfather, an overwhelming event that had rushed upon him like a wave. It had come from nowhere. One moment he was the young naval officer whose picture my aunt used to keep in the apartment, and the next he was holding tiny Cyrus, whose birth just several days before was a wonderful, happy event, but melancholy too. The entrance of Cyrus on this stage meant that someone had to go. Not right away, mind you, but in due course and with biblical certainty. Cyrus, with his affecting newborn's cap and his crinkly face (cute kid!) was like one of those clock alarms that you can turn off for 10 minutes more sleep before it buzzes again. His entrance here, in this apartment, sounded the arrival of a new generation and the aging of another. When did we have that tea?

My mother had heart surgery in September. She is 83. My father is 85 and a bit wobbly. For some years now, I've been studying him, watching him age, looking for clues on how it's done. This is sexist on my part, I know, since in some ways I'm more like my mother than my father, but he and I are both men, father and son, bonded by innumerable backyard games of catch, nights at the ball game, a sense that he is always showing me the way. I query and I probe: What's it like? Old age, I

mean. Are you depressed? ("No.") How do you spend your time? The answers are specific, but I find them vague. I cannot distill the essence of the experience.

After taking my mother out of the hospital, I spent some days at my parents' condo in Florida. I studied their photos, especially the ones of them. I cannot account for their aging. My mind was clotted with clichés—life is brief, etc.—but also with questions.

I have had people tell me stories about their love affairs, about abandoning this person or that for a safer, maybe wiser, choice. Sometimes they were married. Sometimes the other

---

I wondered if  
my father knew  
what I was doing.  
I wondered how  
he could not.

---

person was. I know of a man, now dead, who cried as an old man for the woman he would not leave his wife for. I've heard people regret time not spent with their children. I know a great lawyer, who once worked in government, who told me how he never saw his son grow up. He was always working.

At the end of the day, what matters most—the love you didn't have, or the pain you didn't inflict? At the end of the day, what matter most—the minutes stolen from a child, or the flourishing career? The young are confused about this or that, the complexity of life and how you are never experienced enough for your experiences. But the old too have their questions and they have to do with accounting, with making it all add up. It's important that if you have that cup of tea, the last drop is not a tear.

When my father turned 85, I wanted to write about him. I wanted to say, "I love you, Dad," but that was more about me than it was about him. I wanted to say something about his life, his principles, the impeccable way he

has conducted himself—his ethics, his morals. In that regard, he is very nearly perfect. But everything I wrote smacked of an obituary. It was diseased by the past tense, by the unmistakable signs of finale. I wanted to avoid that. And so I wrote nothing.

While my mother was in the hospital, I took my father to dinner. "Tell me about the orphanage," I asked. "What was it like to have been put in an orphan asylum?" He told the story once again—about his mother dying, his father unable to support the family and coming to visit only occasionally. My grandfather spoke only Yiddish, my father only English. My father's older brother would translate. I posed my questions carefully, nonchalantly, in my best reporter style. Hide your intentions. Don't let the interview subject know when he's said something explosive. Don't let him know what you're getting at.

If it were me, I think I would go to bed every night afraid I would not wake up in the morning. Would I think always of death? My father never let on. I thought once again he was showing me the way, how this thing was done. I remembered one time when he had been in the hospital, but he never complained and he always kidded and smiled. I had come to visit without warning and caught him writhing in pain. But my mother, my sister had never seen him that way. A lesson for you, son.

Now he teaches me yet another lesson. He instructs in silence, by example and inadvertence; he is only being who he is. He and my mother rejoice in the birth of Cyrus, yet they know they will never see him become a man. They both must wonder where the time went, but they are better at their aging than I am at watching it. That cup of tea Burt mentioned—I lift it in a toast to them.

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*Festival Quarterly regularly offers essays and speeches from the larger world that, because of their subject, sensitivity or wisdom, are of interest to our readers.*



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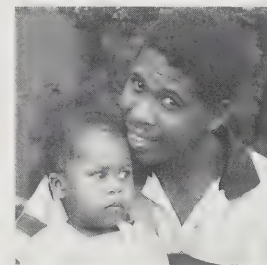
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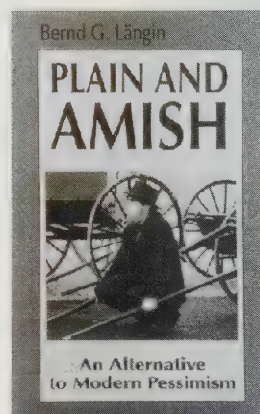
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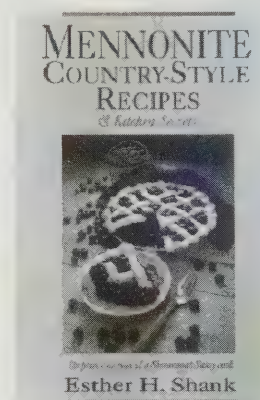
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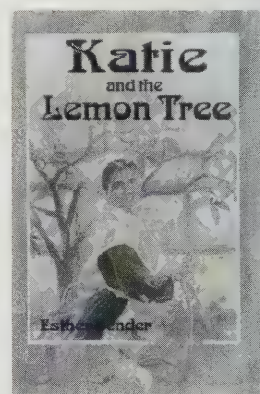


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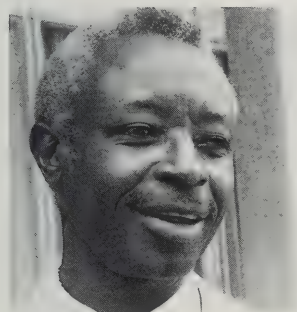


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Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good

## EDITORIAL

### One More Editorial About Peace

I know of two good reasons not to write about peace. What new is there to say? And, there are official church institutions who receive money to keep the issue alive for the rest of us.

So *FQ* readers and official peace-tenders—relax. What I'm about to say falls into the realm of personal confession, not a new editorial trend or an ambush on any organization's, chief agenda. (I might, however, need a peace advocate till I'm through with this!)

World events, plus a few things closer home, have suddenly made me live night and day with thoughts about peace.

I admit to having a streak of cynicism about the subject of peace. On second thought, I'm not cynical about peace; I'm just a little sarcastic about the way we've packaged it lately. It's become a pet, a department, tended by qualified agencies and spokespersons.

Peace is still a cherished part of who I am, as in "I am a peace-loving person from a peace-loving tradition." I have noticed that sometimes I lean more heavily on my tradition than on personal practice.

For instance, I do alright on the big things. I applaud MCC's Peace Section (what do they do, anyway?), favor Peace Study majors in college (if they're not Mickey Mouse curricula that border on being a fad), give my support to the World Peace Tax Fund, and have a warm spot for peaceful demonstrators (providing they're moved by conviction

rather than a zest for showmanship).

So what's bothering me? All this organization lets me put on peace like a hat and gloves. It's possible to dress up in it, while hiding some personal viciousness.

As a driver, I can be a bear on the road. Or, if someone abuses something of mine, it's a little hard for me to forget. If anyone takes advantage of my 3-year-old, I'm inclined to make them sorry. And although I believe the Iranian "students" have a right to clobber Americans in lieu of the Shah, I wanted to sneak off and cheer when Canadian diplomats helped outfox the militants, and Carter showed a little muscle in his State of the Union address. I just wanted the satisfaction of a little squeak of joy ("we showed 'em"); then back to being peace-loving again.

I've begun to wonder if all the talk about peace and all the statistics and all the promotion have made me only a "subscriber" to the idea.

You see, last week I faced up to the likelihood that my daughters will have to register for the draft. It's probably been the best thing that's happened to my peace principle. I've coasted but they can't.

My life may change for all this. I need some help in my journey toward peace.

—PPG

This editorial first appeared in the February, March, April, 1980 issue.

### Articulation?

There is a growing gap among us about whom we consider articulate.

Many among us articulate through their lives; many others articulate with increasingly complex words. All of us do some of both.

The concern here is that North American Mennonites in general appear to be putting more and more stock in words, position papers, and professional degrees. Some whose living speaks clearly are considered "inarticulate" because they can't explain it in professional terms.

This development causes the most alarm when church conferences, supposedly for all of God's people,

increasingly take on the trappings of professional articulation. Someone with a deep concern is taken seriously by many in the church only if she or he can "present a paper" on the matter. In the past, in some parts of the church, one needed to wear a plain suit in order to speak. It now seems required in numerous circumstances that one have a professional degree in order to speak at, or even to attend, many Mennonite meetings.

Is articulation by word superior to articulation by life? Are we losing our understanding and perspective? —MG

This editorial first appeared in the Fall 1988 issue.



Thank you for your review of *Mennonite Peacemaking: From Quietism to Activism* (*Festival Quarterly*, Winter 1994).

You are to be commended for (1) arresting our attention about some of the changes in attitudes toward our philosophy/theology about peacemaking; (2) daring to provide a critique of what appears to be some lopsided thinking; (3) again challenging what seem to be inconsistencies in our peace witness. More attention needs to be given to a holistic and biblical peace position which would address the implication of moving from "quietism" to activism.

Harvey R. Sider, Moderator of  
the Brethren in Christ Church  
Grantham, Pennsylvania

This is in response to the editorial of the Winter '94 issue, as well as the book review on page 26, both of which brought out in bold relief the sad experiences we had (First Mennonite, Newton) when we availed ourselves mistakenly of the "expertise" of these so-called Conference "Sociologists" to help us solve our problem.

The Integration problem, as well as the tendency to "water down" our Anabaptist tenets, only helped to add confusion to our problem.

Had we just gone about our business in our own way, we would still have our pastor today, and much pain and sorrow could have been spared.

John D. Wiebe  
Newton, Kansas

I really liked your article "Will We Feel Betrayed if They Are Happy." I had a happy childhood and good relationships with men and have been blissfully unaware of how much suffering and abuse there is, except what I've read about recently.

I can't imagine how it would be for my sons and daughters growing up with some of the more brutal images that are currently being portrayed. Of course we have to warn them of things I didn't know existed when I was young, but there has to be some balance.

Wendy Pradels  
Strasbourg, France

The following letters are a sampling of those we have received in response to our invitation to comment about *Festival Quarterly* on the occasion of the magazine's 20th anniversary.

For a long time I have wanted to express my appreciation for the "Film Ratings." I resent the false expectations I have gotten from many reviews, but have found those in *Festival Quarterly* most reliable. I really appreciate that. Only thing is—we get the ratings too late! Some of the good or worthwhile movies have come and gone before I get your ratings.

A testimony for your magazine: I don't save papers or magazines, but I do believe I have every *Festival Quarterly* you have published—or at least since I have subscribed.

Delsie Bartel  
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

I like the great variety of articles you provide. I find the magazine stimulating and interesting. I look forward to every new issue. One thing impresses me very much: your sensitive inclusion of our "faith brothers," the Amish and Old Order Mennonites. You have written about them in a very sensitive and intuitive way. We do have much in common and much to learn from each other. *Festival Quarterly* has embraced the whole Anabaptist family in a way that no other publication has. Keep up the good work!

Sarah Yoder Scott  
Newark, Delaware

Keep up the good work. I especially appreciate the movie reviews and am looking forward to receiving your "Guide" this fall.

Dwayne and Sandy Schrag  
Ft. Worth, Texas

We have enjoyed each issue of *Festival Quarterly* that has reached us. Thank you very much. The feature articles on Mennonite history are helpful to me especially. We are pleased to recommend it to others.

Lawrence Klippenstein  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

*Festival Quarterly* plays an important role among Mennonites of various branches, all over North America and beyond, with leanings toward or interest in the arts. It is one of the few places in which serious Mennonite artists can

see and hear about the work of their peers. Yet the creative work that is presented and treated in the magazine often seems bland and predictable to me, trading heavily in nostalgia and quaintness. Sometimes it seems that only the most traditional and unthreatening artists—or the most traditional works produced by versatile artists—are represented in the magazine.

I would like to see *Festival Quarterly* be more adventurous, more open to experimental creative work. Ezra Pound once said "Artists are the antennae of the race." I believe, also, that the artist's enterprise involves discovery, disturbance, struggle, as well as affirmation and celebration. This is a yeasty and exciting time for Mennonite artists, but it is hard to get that impression from *Festival Quarterly*. Other journals, such as *Mennonite Life*, *Journal of Mennonite Studies*, and now *Mennonot*, seem to show a much wider spectrum of Mennonite writing.

Truth be told, I've more or less stopped sending poems to *Festival Quarterly*, partly because it's never done any good and partly because it takes so long to hear back. My explanation, if people ask, is that my poems tend to be too quirky, jittery, and lacking in the essential Mennonite markers: no coverings, quilts, or zwieback. But then, here I am at this General Conference school on the far west side of Ohio, without a buggy in sight. Am I too far away from Lancaster and even Holmes County to be a "real" Mennonite?

For this matter, I'd like to see more work from within the Amish and conservative Mennonite communities in *Festival Quarterly*. Those groups are heavily represented in your magazine and your other enterprises, of course, but mostly by outsiders, academics, and so forth. There must be Amish writers beside David Kline.

Things I like: creative work (fiction, poems, essays) by Mennonites (not necessarily identified as such by plain coats/quilts/martyrdoms). Interviews/features on working Mennonite artists, writers, intellectuals, trends in the Mennonite artistic community. Columns by Keith Helmuth and Kenton Brubaker.



Things I could do without: articles of dubious relevance reprinted from other sources—four pages on the solving of Fermat's theorem? Gloomy editorials about the perils of integration. A review section that seems, at times, an extension of the advertising section. Oversized mug shots dominating a page.

All this is just because you asked, and will, I hope, be taken as an attempt at honest feedback from the point of view of one would-be Mennonite, poet, writer, teacher, father, human being. With all my grouching, I'm still glad that *Festival Quarterly* exists and hope it will continue for a long while.

Jeff Gundy, Bluffton College  
Bluffton, Ohio

The *Festival Quarterly* has long been one of my favorite magazines. It addresses the arts which were long ignored in the Mennonite church. I pass my issues along to a friend who uses drama in our worship at Trinity Mennonite in Morton Illinois. The photography, sketches, humor, and articles are informative and interesting.

The only criticism I share is a personal one—that is, the anti-union of the Mennonite and General Conference churches as expressed in Merle's article on the subject. It makes me sad because I can't understand the theology of disunity. I was not always a Mennonite but like their respect and cooperation with each other.

Keep the *Festival Quarterly* coming—an informative, attractive arm of the Mennonite church.

Arlene Egli  
Goshen, Indiana

I can't get along without your film ratings. They are the surest guide I have found to quality films. Thank you. Don't drop them. I look forward to receiving the video guide.

Leanne Schertz  
Peoria, Illinois

What we especially like about *Festival Quarterly* is a chance to see where the cutting edge of the arts is and who are the cutters. We enjoy all the regular columns and the irregular ones, too. And all the advertisements! I'll bet you could even find more cartoons if you tried real hard. Don't drop any of the regulars; maybe even add a few.

One segment of the arts that you have ignored are the artists who support the artists and are truly artists in their own rights. Such people, I guess, as myself—a full-time piano tuner-technician-restorer who also restores pipe organs, reed organs, harpsichords, etc. Now, I did also have nearly 40 years of technical support to the music industry and have prepared instruments for many fine artists who would have been absolutely lost without the artistic tuning, voicing, regulating that I gave them. Or the old pipe organ that received a voice that was mute for decades, or restoring the old harmonium that Anton Dvorak played in Iowa, or supplying harmoniums for the Minneapolis Symphony and the Omaha Symphony and many others. Even bringing back to life an old autoharp for the MCC Crowded Closet to sell.

Some other people in this group would be the glass blowers who work in labs, the people who make quality custom papers, paint makers, framers, furniture restorers: the people who get their hands dirty so the "artists" can do what they do best. Our Mennonite roots are very much with this latter group.

I admit this group would be hard to come by; they seldom get the credit they deserve, seldom from the artist

him-/herself. As an example I restored an old tracker pipe organ for a Unitarian church. At the dedication the organist and string quartet got lavish praise; nothing for the technician/artist. As my son remarked: "In those circles you are blue collar."

'Nough said. Keep up the good work.

John and Becky Bixler  
Iowa City, Iowa

I especially like the articles that include a cross-section of Mennonitism; also, the listings of new books that I'd not seen offered anywhere else.

Anne Bergey  
Boston, Massachusetts

The editors welcome letters. Letters for publication must include the writer's name and address and should be sent to *Festival Quarterly*, 3513 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse, PA 17534. The editors regret that at times the volume of mail necessitates publishing only a representative cross-section. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space or clarity.





# MINDING PSYCHOLOGY

by J. Craig Haas

Is it possible that Mennonites have too much psychology? Why, when one person in ten has some form of mental illness, should that question arise? We all know that stress abounds. We understand, further, that those who suffer emotional or childhood or relational difficulties need professional psychologists; some problems ought not to be entrusted to amateurs. (I myself spent a few months in counseling for depression several years ago.) A therapist may help us sort things out.

Therapy, on the other hand, is not meant to become a way of life, and the patient should hope to function without the help of the counselor in time. Nevertheless, psychological language and concepts are seeping increasingly into our everyday speech and thought. Psychological terms show up in conversations among people who have no awareness of their origins, except, perhaps, through the self-help articles they've read in supermarket magazines. Midday and late afternoon television yield a feast of talk shows featuring anybody's quirk, hang-up, obsession, or perversion—for all to see.

Mennonites who swim in this ocean of "openness" have absorbed not only the dogmas, but the language of the psychological currents. In addition, spirituality is popular again, as Mennonites "process" their "inner feelings" and "dialogue" about "faith issues" in "share groups." In some corners, the Sunday sermon may be pushed aside in favor of more sharing time. As the microphone is passed Oprah-style, the congregation "affirms" and "supports" the speakers, and inner healing begins.

Much of this, of course, is simply pop psychology. Reputable, professional psychology has also made its mark among Mennonites, often for good reasons. In fact, the respect for sound psychology is probably one reason pop psychology has caught on with such strength.

## Why Mennonites Love Psychology

How did Mennonites come to so esteem psychology? Something in Mennonite spirituality attracts us to psychological subjects. We are heirs of the subjective turn in religion produced by the Protestant Reformation. Luther, with his watchword of "justification by faith," raised the believer's own inner conviction above anything so crassly objective as the visible church, sacraments, or good works. What counted most was on the inside, invisible, known only to oneself and to God.

Our Anabaptist forerunners sometimes developed highly subjective and individualistic theologies which denigrated anything "merely outward." Most, however, tried to hold the inner and outer aspects of life together, although they carefully distinguished between them. Faith began within, but produced visible fruit; spirit became flesh. But the work of God always began within the individual. It was first sensed by the individual, rather than by others through observation. Despite Jesus' words that "by their fruits you shall know them," the inner witness of the heart and conscience has generally been the real evidence for Mennonites that one is at peace—inner peace—with God.

The adoption of Pietism by many Mennonite communities during the late 17th and 18th centuries sealed the subjective approach to spirituality. Pietism was concerned with spiritual techniques designed to produce a warm, emotional devotion of the heart. Pietism had risen in the state churches as a reaction and antidote to sterile intellectualism and formalism. Reason was traded for emotion; the logical gave way to the psychological. One kept track of oneself by introspection, searching the heart's depths for unrepented sin, wicked motives, unsubmitted thoughts.

The Pietists paid a great deal of attention to themselves, and Mennonites paid attention to Pietism. Both traditions shared a preoccupation with the interior correctness of the soul, which conscience alone could reveal. Mennonites who adopted Pietism, to one degree or another, often welcomed insights about the self which needed to be crucified. Psychology provided such insights and encouraged inner explorations.

Protestantism, to which Mennonites are, alas, indebted, contributed to the demand for psychological help outside the religious setting. It abolished the confessional where one could come clean about sins and errors and receive counsel and hope. While ten "Our Fathers" cannot by themselves take away sins, the opportunity to reaffirm one's faith, within the hearing of a spiritual counselor, can offer hope, assurance, and strength. Under Protestantism, believers are much more on their own. The "priesthood of all believers" has usually meant that no believer is a priest. The church is more often a gathering of lonely hikers, than it is a pilgrim community.

The evangelical, who might fairly be called an "extreme" Protestant, is guided by individual interpre-



# Something in Mennonite spirituality attracts us to psychological subjects.

tation of scripture, personal faith in a personal Savior, and the conscience within. Assurance of salvation is a matter of conscience alone. Evangelicalism has great faith in the self.

From the earliest years of Anabaptism, Mennonites were not satisfied simply to be good; they had to be right. This perfectionist ideal is frequently accompanied by anxiety. Since there are many ways to go wrong, and only one right way, the church has carefully regulated the conduct of its members to ensure continuance on the straight and narrow path, enforcing agreed-upon behavior with the threat of discipline. Mennonites who grew up during the earlier decades of this century often felt the force of law more than the power of grace. They tended to fear the wrath of a watchful judge, more than love the one who first loved them.

For some, this controlled environment gave clarity, certainty, and meaning, and continues so today. Others experienced the rigor of nonconformity to the world, conformity to the church, or both, as oppressive. Anger, denial, and guilt were the fruits of these circumstances, yet the church lacked theological resources to offer any relief beyond submission. For these people, psychology was the long-awaited gospel.

Mennonites are also drawn to psychology for a happier reason—service. Mennonites are attracted to the practice of psychology and social work because, while helping and healing, they can find fulfillment in putting things right, in bringing order from chaos.

## So What's The Problem?

In part, what makes psychology so dangerous is its claim to be scientific. I am emphatically *not* suggesting that science is an enemy of religion. Like the scientist, I do not suppose that any theory represents science's final word. In fact, it is the nature of science to develop better and more refined models of explanation. For example, in the seventeenth century the physics of Aristotle were replaced by a mechanistic model of nature. The universe was believed to be a vast machine, composed of lesser machines, such as the bodies of living things. At first, the mind was considered a "spiritual substance" rather than a physical one. Over time, the mind came to be viewed as a production of the brain, a part of the mechanized universe.

The physics of the mechanistic universe are Newtonian physics (named for the English physicist, Sir Isaac Newton). In this system the world is closed, or self-contained, with no surprises. Everything runs like a perfect clock, whose movements can be carefully relied upon and predicted. It is a deterministic world from which freedom has been banished. Every event can be



"Left Brain,"  
carved drawing on a clay tile, by Sandy Zeiset Richardson.



explained from other events; nothing is unaccounted for. The universe, including human history, unfolds according to the pattern established in the first moment of existence, for it cannot be otherwise. Once a perfect clockmaker starts the perfect clock, the position of every part is strictly determined for all time.

Psychology became a science at the time science was Newtonian and mechanistic. Psychology, therefore, tends

to understand human choices and behavior as caused by preceding events, some of which are themselves choices or behaviors. Every event has a cause which explains and determines it. If one looks hard enough, one can discover why someone acted as he or she did. For indeed, the person could not have acted otherwise.

The problem with such a view should be apparent: when responsibility for choices and actions lies in events outside the agent, personal responsibility evaporates. An agent is not free to initiate a new series of events which are unaccounted for by previous events. Personal choice and responsibility are mere illusions because the sources of our actions lie beyond us. How can Mennonites maintain the practice of personal accountability in such a world? This picture of the mind is a moth which eats away the fabric of community life.

Fortunately, in the twentieth century, physics has undergone another revolution which might enable us to keep the mind within nature, without subjecting it to determinism. This change has come through the discovery of quantum theory. In quantum physics, events occur within atoms without apparent predictability. They seem to happen from no prior cause, as if bubbling up from nothing. The occurrence of such events in atoms cracked open cause-and-effect determinism. There are surprises in nature. Freedom is possible, for if nature is not wholly seamless, human choices and actions, too, could be spontaneous events. The mind may be studied within nature without being bound to the clockwork. If the mind is more free than once thought, psychology will need to be modest in its predictions and prescriptions.

### A Preoccupation with Feelings

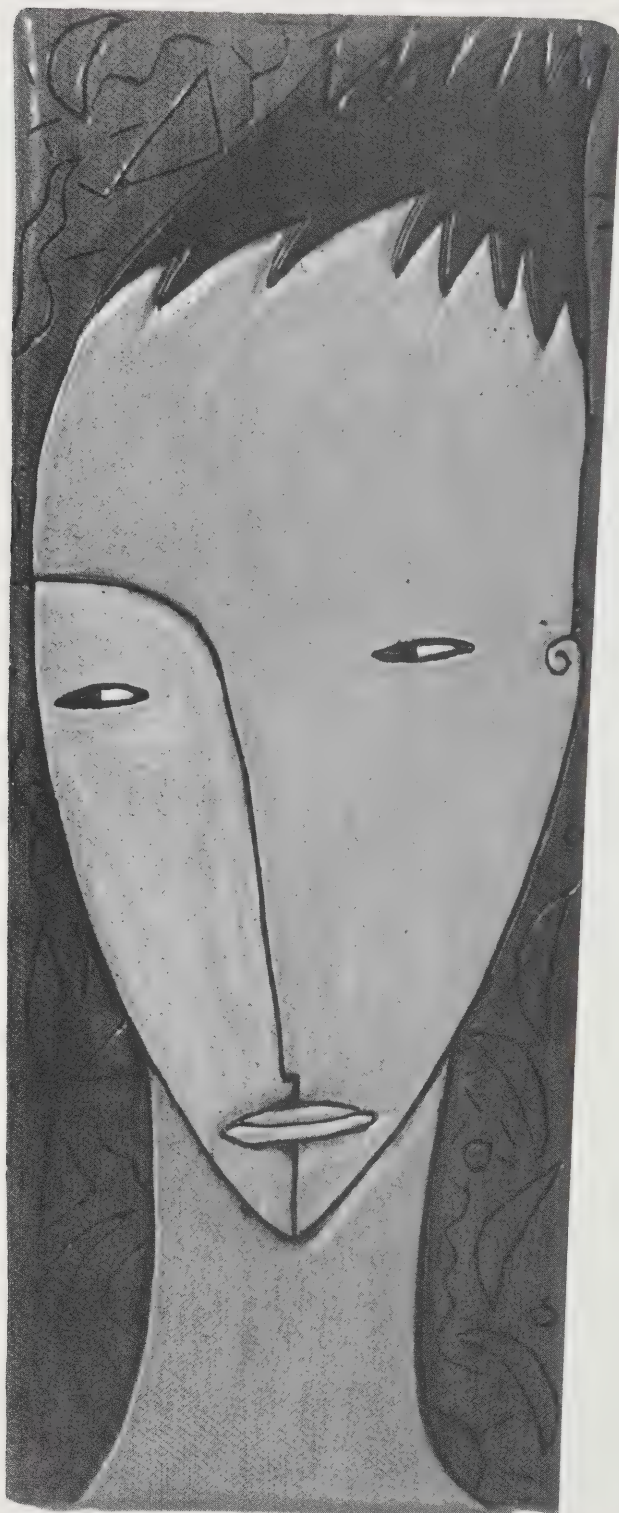
There is a second problem (in addition to the personal responsibility question) with psychology for Mennonites. It is the use of psychological concepts and language to such a degree that there is an increasing emphasis on feelings, rather than motives.

A preoccupation with feelings undercuts the fundamentally ethical character of biblical faith. The aim of genuine spirituality is not to accept one's vices, but to change them. Psychology, like superstition, may substitute ritual for repentance—and thereby reduce or eliminate the guilt of the supplicant—but fail to deal with God's expectations.

Theology has been invaded by psychology. Our own inner experience and spiritual-formation-via-technique becomes our focus, rather than God's good news. Spirituality, expressed in the language of therapy, is becoming an idol.

### Two Responses

One way Mennonites can balance psychology's emphasis on emotion is to rediscover the rational life of the mind. For over two millennia, Western civilization believed that the rule of the emotions by reason was a condition of happiness. With the development of Romanticism 200 years ago, that notion was inverted. Reason was made to serve passion; truth gave place to personal conviction. And since no two people share exactly the same feelings in the way they might share the



*"Right Brain,"  
carved drawing on a clay tile, by Sandy Zeiset Richardson.*



From their earliest years,  
Mennonites were not satisfied  
simply to be good;  
they had to be  
right.

same ideas, individualism took hold.

It may seem odd and downright un-Mennonite to suggest a return to a life of reason. The heirs of Reformation traditions have generally regarded reason as the antithesis of faith. The “rationalist” is the incarnation of unbelief. Didn’t Luther call reason a “whore”? Weren’t the Anabaptists primarily unlearned people who confounded scholars? Haven’t a lot of Mennonites been wary of education?

The fact that the Anabaptists used argument to advocate their beliefs suggests that they did not despise reason outright. Instead, they complained that others mis-employed reason to search out excuses for their error. As a result, reason was labelled “rebellious.” But Anabaptists met these excuses with counter-arguments. They understood reason to respect an individual’s ability to come to his or her own decisions.

A return to reason will respect the freedom of individuals. The message must then appeal to persons as agents who may choose. People are not to be manipulated by an appeal to their passions, whether of hope or of fear, of pity or of contempt. Sermons which are overly sentimental or threatening are as out of place as an organ rehearsed to rise to a crescendo when the evangelist appeals for funds.

On my first occasion to teach a college class in logic, a student remarked, “This course has ruined television for me. I can’t stand to hear commercials any more.” She saw how shamelessly advertisers manipulate the audience by appeals which are wholly irrelevant to the products and services they offer. Attention to reason brings much of the seduction of culture (“the world”) into the light, exposing it.

The Bible encourages the pursuit of wisdom. Preachers have quickly noted that this wisdom is divine, not human. But what can this distinction mean? Perhaps reason is to be assigned to human wisdom, while divine wisdom is mystically available to the few. Divine wisdom is often seen as something other-worldly, poured out upon the seeker like celestial gravy. But when God “gave” Solomon wisdom, it turned out to be a talent for insight and the ability to speak wisely about natural objects—matters open for public and scientific investigation. Wisdom from God is the gift to see the world aright; “human wisdom” refers to the abuse of that gift through rebellious cleverness.

But the most important way Mennonites should respond to psychology is to rediscover the therapeutic value of gospel, the good news.

The apostle Paul once remarked, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for *it* is the power of God for salvation to all who believe” (Romans 1:16; italics mine). Good news as

the power of God. How is it, then, that religious faith, which has been the source of joy, strength, and purpose for so many, has also been the cause of depression, anxiety, and frustration for many others? Is it always the fault of the person for whom religion is the problem? It is equally possible that such persons have not heard good news in their religion, and psychologists are rightly called upon to help them find relief from their burdens.

Can we come to the point where our gospel is recognized as therapy? I am not suggesting that the gospel merely provides a pious vocabulary for an otherwise wholly psychological cure. (We have that now in abundance in some quarters.) I am suggesting that we reexamine our systems of belief, our heritage, and the Bible itself in the light of good news.

For example, it is customary to read the Beatitudes as eight more commandments for the New Testament. “Blessed are the poor in spirit” becomes “Thou shalt be poor in spirit [especially since thou art not so already].” As a result, we develop methods for becoming poor in spirit, in the hope of being blessed. However, we overlook the fact that Jesus pronounced the Beatitudes as blessings upon a crowd. We should take them to say, “If you are one of the poor in spirit, I have good news for you! If you are a peacemaker, you are blessed!” This example is not psychology in sheep’s clothing; it is simply exegesis.

We might examine other assumptions, both traditional and contemporary. Are we humans really a “mass of damnation,” merely tolerated by God in the hope that we will repent before it’s too late? Ought we to think of the world as a battlefield over which a spiritual warfare is being fought, and that every temptation is a manifestation of that combat? In contrast, one of the ways the ancient world heard the gospel was as the good news that life was no longer a wrestling match with supernatural forces. Human trials had natural causes, capable of reasonable explanation and treatment, with God’s grace. Jesus alone is Lord of heaven and earth.

Instead of intensive introspection and the effort to patch ourselves together just right, we need God’s good news—clear, loving, healing truth.

*J. Craig Haas, Mt. Joy, Pennsylvania, is the compiler of Readings from Mennonite Writings, New and Old and co-author of The Mennonite Starter Kit.*





*"The Starry Night," by Vincent van Gogh (1889). Oil on canvas, 29" x 36¼". The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Acquired through the Lillie P. Bliss Bequest. Photograph © 1994 The Museum of Modern Art, New York.*

# ON CLEAR NIGHTS, GEESE, and TELEVISION

by Bob Regier



# What if the writer of the Psalms had listened to the radio all day?

A reproduction of Van Gogh's painting, *The Starry Night*, recently caught my eye. It interested me because it was a somewhat unlikely context. The painting was used as an illustration for an essay in *Audubon* magazine that was titled "A Clear Night Sky."<sup>1</sup> The writer, Peter Steinhart, reminds us that "We were once a star-struck species. Sky-watching was once a universal part of human culture." That it was "almost universal among humans to believe the heavens, rather than the Earth. Looking at the sky once kindled awe, story, and song."

The Psalms certainly confirm this:

*the moon and the stars set in their  
place  
the vault of heaven reveals his  
handiwork  
night with night shares its  
knowledge*

But Steinhart has a burden: His concern is that we no longer view the heavens. Those in urban settings can't view the heavens. Manufactured light, the Three Mile Island light of civilization, obscures the clarity of the dark canopy that covers us. Steinhart quotes Alane Baker of San Francisco's Morrison Planetarium who observes, "Even astronomers don't look at stars anymore. Their telescopes look at the stars, and they just look at their monitors." Walt Terris, an amateur astronomer in San Francisco, said, "You can find astronomers you can take outside, and they wouldn't be able to recognize a single star." Steinhart concludes his essay by musing about the potential value of star-gazing, that it might make us

different persons—that it might reopen the vents of intuition and restore a sense of humility—that it might provide balance and help us return to old sources of confidence and trust. It seems to me that this is precisely what the Psalmist gained after seeing and contemplating the heavens.

I confess to relatively little star-gazing. Is it a loss? Am I diminished in some way by my failure to do that? Am I diminished if I no longer see horizons, undulating hills, shorelines, streambeds, bluestem, pentstemon, seedpods, or spiderwebs? Is it my loss if Walkmans, air conditioners, elevator music, car horns, and lawnmowers provide a cocoon of sound that separates me from the cardinal and the cricket? To what extent am I still aware? To what extent does it matter?

What if the writer of the Psalms had listened to the radio all day? I doubt whether the following would have been written:

*the vault of heaven reveals his  
handiwork  
One day speaks to another  
night with night shares its  
knowledge,  
and this without speech or language  
or sound of any voice.  
Their music goes out through all the  
earth . . .*

To what extent are we surrounded by a second, synthetic nature—that manufactured world that insulates us from the first nature that permeates the Psalms? Again, does it matter? The naturalist Aldo Leopold matter-of-factly observed in *A Sand*

*County Almanac* that "the opportunity to see Geese is more important than television . . ."<sup>2</sup>

It has been said that the function of an artist is to make the invisible visible. If we look up on a clear night we see hundreds of tiny points of light. Van Gogh saw more. He saw and conveyed the rhythm, the movement, and the energy of the universe. The Psalmist saw more.

All of us are artists. We have the ability to see more—to move beyond the obvious and the superficial, to make the invisible visible. But to see, to be aware, takes time. The artist Georgia O'Keeffe said that "nobody sees a flower—really—it is so small—we haven't time—and to see takes time, like to have a friend takes time."

Is it still possible to re-sensitize ourselves so that the obvious and the superficial can give way to the rich and surprising world of the invisible—that waits to be discovered in our colleagues, our friends, our own spiritual journey, or the night sky?

<sup>1</sup> Steinhart, Peter, "A Clear Night Sky," *Audubon*, January, 1988, pp. 8-11

<sup>2</sup> Leopold, Aldo, *A Sand County Almanac*, Oxford, 1970, p. vii.

Bob Regier is a printmaker and graphic designer from North Newton, Kansas. He was a professor of art at Bethel College for many years and has designed exhibits for Kauffman Museum, including the traveling exhibit, "Mirror of the Martyrs."



# A Refreshing Dip in the Anabaptist Music Pool

a review by Jim Bishop

To evaluate objectively a recording by the Hutterian Brethren of Farmington, Pennsylvania, required clearing three mental hurdles.

First, associating this ostensibly austere communal group with compact discs is a bit like seeing an Amish buggy with mag wheels and a cellular phone.

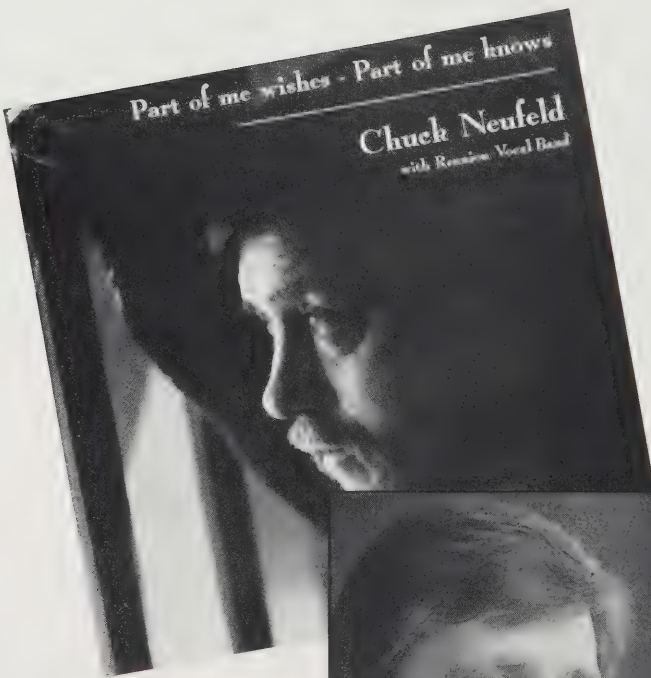
Second, their work has a Christmas theme, and I played it in early July . . . in 90-plus degree heat and humidity.

Third, I have a natural suspicion of *any* album written and performed by would-be musicians within the Anabaptist family stream. I've heard too many over the years that have sadly lacked in both production and artistic quality, i.e., "We were well-received at the concert we gave at conference assembly and decided to do an album. But we could only come up with enough money to rent the basement studio for two hours."

That era, thankfully, is ending, if the recent efforts of Jim Croegaert, Chuck Neufeld, and the Hutterite group are any indication. Not only have vocals and instrumentation been significantly upgraded, but they're now waving the technological magic wand of C.D.-quality sound.

Assessing the work of these three somewhat disparate artists in one review is a bit like mixing a paisley tie with a striped shirt, but several common threads emerge—simplicity, honesty, and quality musicianship.

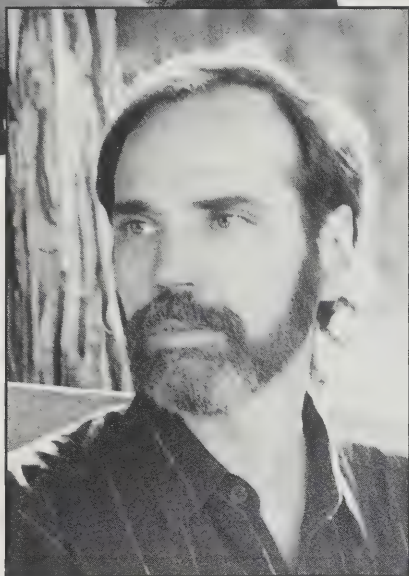
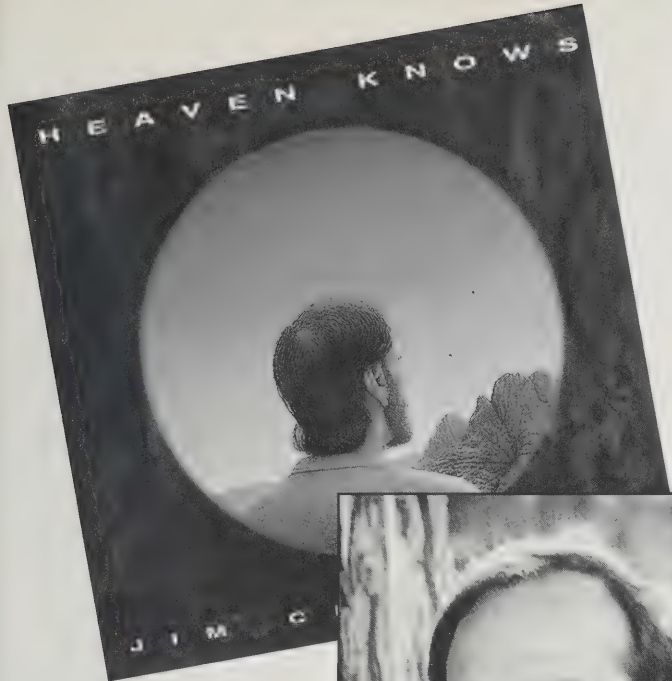
Chuck Neufeld's recent release, *Part of Me Wishes, Part of Me Knows*, continues his *angst* and grappling with life's Big Issues—abusive relationships, love, friendship, peace and justice, reconciliation and hope. The man has mellowed somewhat with passing time. But he's also improved with age. Perhaps his discovery of other '60s kindred spirits, a la The Reunion Vocal



Chuck Neufeld

photo by Robert Maust





FQ/Dawn J. Ranck

Jim Croegaert

Band, helped recharge his creative batteries. The Band helps out on most of the tracks, and, in fact, Jim Croegaert plays piano, keyboard, and bass on many.

Best bets off this recording: "Harvest," "No Matter," "Hope to the End," and "We Will Heal Again." A pretty song like "O Your Love" is particularly effective because it's just Chuck and his six-string. The Bethel College (KS) Choir's backing on "Jesus on the Mainline" I didn't find all that stirring for what is supposed to be a rousing black gospel number.

Neufeld's voice sounds like a hybrid of Marc Cohen, Bob Seger, and Don Henley; a mite strained but consistently intense and lucid. The primary drawback for me is that, after awhile, Neufeld's tunes begin to have a ring of sameness.

Croegaert's style I find hard to delineate. One minute he's brooding; the next ebullient. But his melodies are infectious. Try dislodging such pieces as "Changes" and "Shine on Me" from your head after playing them several times. Other favorites include the a cappella finger-snapping "Waiting" (reminiscent of Billy Joel's "For the Longest Time") and an ode on the mysteries of parenting, "Hold On/Let Go." The mesmerizing "Why Do We Hunger for Beauty" gives me goosebumps.

The Hutterian offering, *The Universe Sings*, is a Christmas cantata, composed by Marlys and Debra Swinger for choir and small orchestra in three parts—"The Universe," "The Earth," and "The Future"—sort

of a sacred travelogue of God's creative work in history.

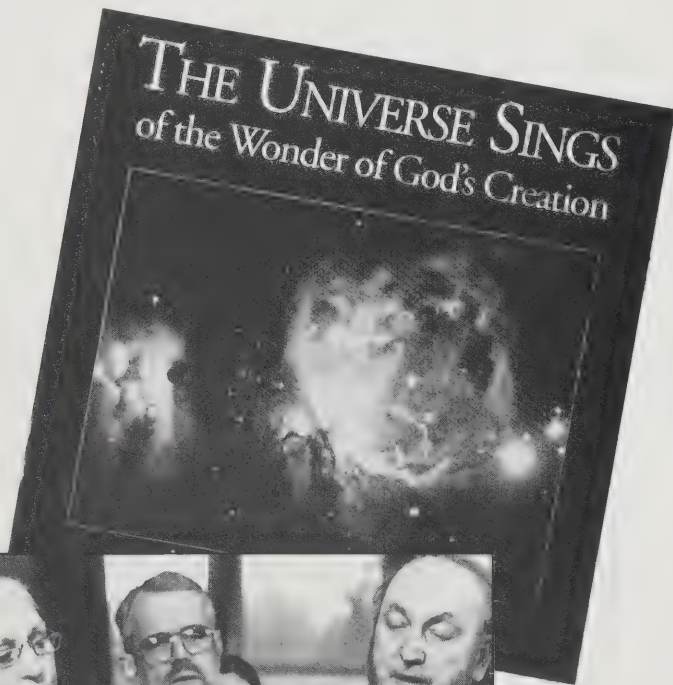
While initially struck by the artistic sensibility, I found the words sometimes hard to decipher, and the orchestration often transcended the vocal quality. And like most cantatas, there are memorable moments sandwiched between stretches of dullness.

The sections on events surrounding Christ's nativity, particularly "Angels" and "Jesus Comes in Stillness," are especially melodic and inspiring, as is the "Fulfillment" finale. However, I found myself at times wanting to speed things up, to move on to the next track. But that's my problem. Or maybe blame it on MTV or VH-1 influences. It's highly unlikely any of these selections will make the video music channels' playlists.

These musicians write and perform their own material, a trait I admire. All three recordings include helpful printed lyrics.

Granted, these artists represent diverse styles, but their recordings will make amicable additions to your record library if you value well-rooted music that kinda grows on you.

*Jim Bishop is a member of the communications department at Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.*



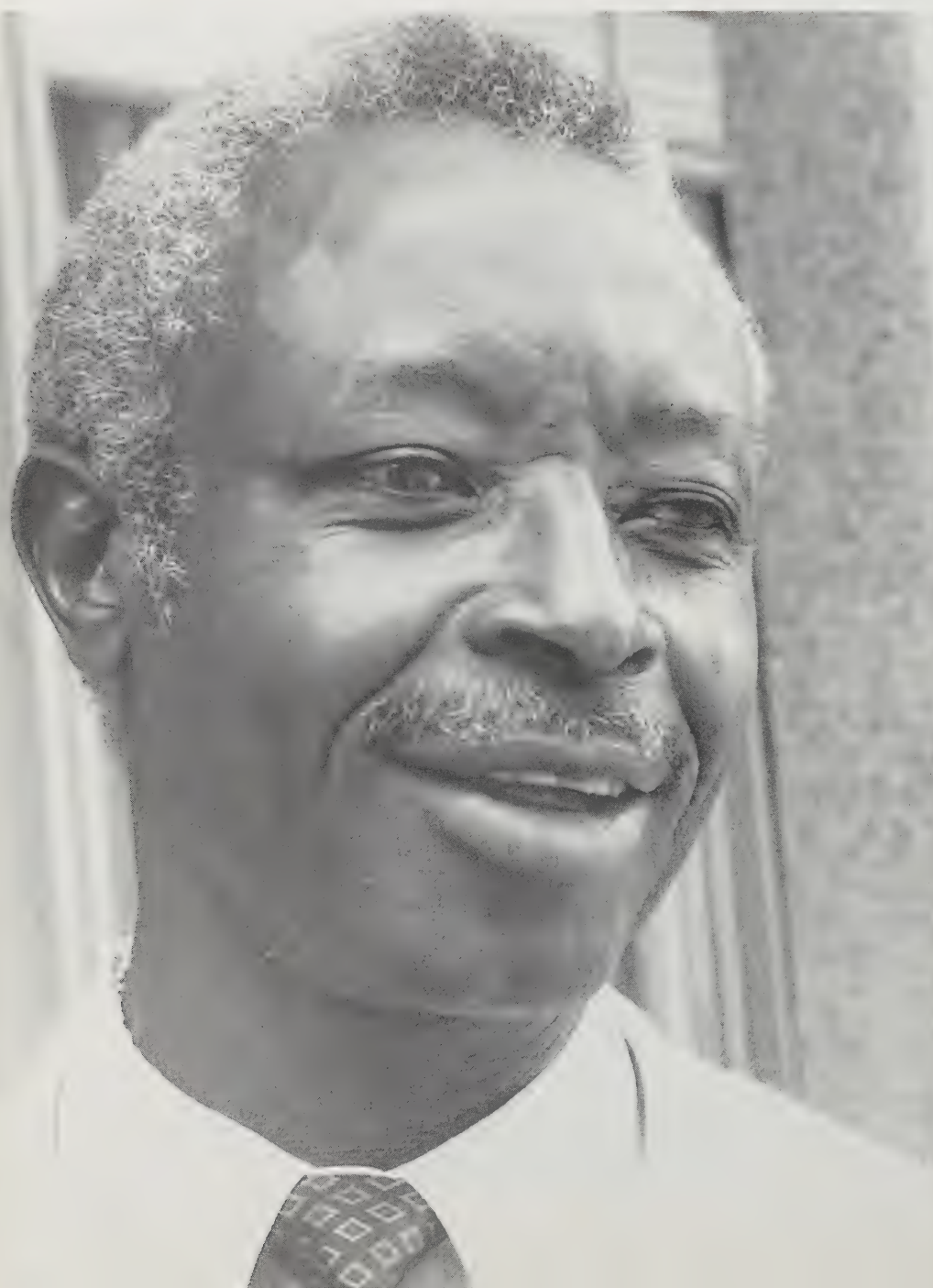
Members of the Hutterian Brethren



# MODERN MENNONITE DILEMMAS *in Zaire*

by Phyllis Pellman Good

Photos by FQ/Merle Good



**H**ow does a church, brought into being with the help of missionaries, become a body freed of that outside management and presence?

How are leaders cultivated, how do they emerge, when the missionaries move on? The route is often circuitous and the path mottled, as is the case with a perceptive current leader in Zaire—Nkumbi Mudiayi Shambuyi.

Nkumbi is educated and experienced in business, with the sense that, in spite of himself, he has ended up in the church. He views his presence there as a combination of providential circumstances, a surprising spiritual event, and his own choosing, albeit, reluctant at times.

Nkumbi's bearing is regal, although tempered with humility. His ability to tell stories is legendary and gently dramatic. He makes his own life story a tale, unhurried, taking few shortcuts as he recounts it.

His family's involvement with missionaries started with his father who, as a boy, "worked for white Presbyterians because there were no other persons to work for." He was a servant on the Presbyterians' boat that ran the river from Kinshasa to Kasai.

When the Belgian owners of a mining company came seeking trustworthy help, the Presbyterians



recommended Nkumbi's father.

Then in 1912, when Mennonite missionaries arrived in the Congo, they discovered that "earlier missionaries had chosen the best places—around the rivers and towns. But the interior had not yet been 'claimed.' People were afraid to go there. But the Mennonites said, we're not going to just sit here. We're going in to confront the problems of the interior." (Thus the formation of the Congo Inland Mission).

The Mennonites asked their Presbyterian compatriots for some personnel leads. Whom would they suggest as a river guide to the interior? The Presbyterians pointed to Mudiandambu Samuel (the father of Nkumbi), then employed by the Belgian mining company to take convoys up the river to Charlesville, the site the Mennonites had picked for their first mission. "My father had become a Christian through the Presbyterians, and the Mennonites would say, we want you to come and work with us. He would reply, 'I am already engaged [with the mining outfit], but as a Christian, I will help you.'"

Not all was well at home, however. Samuel and his wife, whom he had met through the Presbyterians' school, were childless. "In our society, that is a failure," Nkumbi explains flatly. His mother begged and pled with God, finally promising the child she would bear to God. "After many years, I was born. The story was well known, even in the mining town. There are still people there who call me 'the only child.'"

"When I was born (August 25, 1936—I know the date because the missionaries were there), my parents took me to the missionaries and said, 'Here is our tithe; we give this child back to God.'"

"But the child who had been given to God became a rebel. I didn't want to hear the Gospel."

Nkumbi went to a Catholic school ("The only option"), and one day took with him some church history books, published by Mennonites, which his parents owned. He couldn't read, but he liked books and thought he should have some in

## "Frankly, you people from the West throw away— waste— your religious heritage."

school. When the priest discovered the content of the books, he accused Nkumbi of trying to convert his friends to Protestantism. Nkumbi's punishment? He could not be baptized in the Catholic church!

Suddenly the church became more fascinating to him. The Mennonite missionaries began to court him for their secondary school, but Nkumbi wasn't interested. "By then I was quite taken by the Catholic liturgy."

This time, the "spoiled, much loved, only child" was forced to yield. "My father insisted, so I went to the Mennonite school." (The parallels to privileged Mennonites elsewhere only continue!)

In order to give him a thorough background in the Bible, school administrators put Nkumbi back several classes. "The global ambience of the school, and the teaching, drew me to faith. I began to understand the Bible I had at home. I had a conversion, and I was baptized by Archie Graber from Ohio."

But the tensions for Nkumbi, by this time in his early twenties, were only beginning to take shape. They were the classic, "modern" dilemmas that Westerners generally claim as their own. He wanted a prestigious profession, but the church was calling him. "When I finished school, I got the office job I wanted in the mining company. I registered for a correspondence course from Belgium in management and accounting. And I wrote a letter, asking for a raise. My supervisors read more into my request than I meant. At that time our country was starting to think about independence, and when I mentioned 'socialism' and 'communism' in my letter, I must

have impressed them for a black man. They called my father in, who was just completing 35 years with the mining company, to tell him how disappointed they were with his son, how I had sinister, bad ideas that might cause a political uprising among the employees, and how they planned to fire me!

"So I left the mining village and went to work for a Belgian bank, the BCB, as an accountant and manager of one section. I stayed until independence in 1960."

In the civil war that followed independence, Nkumbi and his wife, Kanku, and their child were forced to leave Kananga, the town where they lived.

Nkumbi and Kanku are Balubas, one of the two tribes that fell into bloody conflict (with the encouragement of the Belgians). "The prime victims in these kinds of massacres are the educated, because they are considered a greater loss," explains Nkumbi. For safety reasons, the family, now with a second child, went to the "birth center of the Baluba tribe." It was a particularly dangerous situation because the Belgians still held this area and the Lulus, the other opposing tribe, were determined to overcome the Balubas.

"We were between two forces. Almost two million people had come to this area from all over Zaire, and we Balubas had to create our own government."

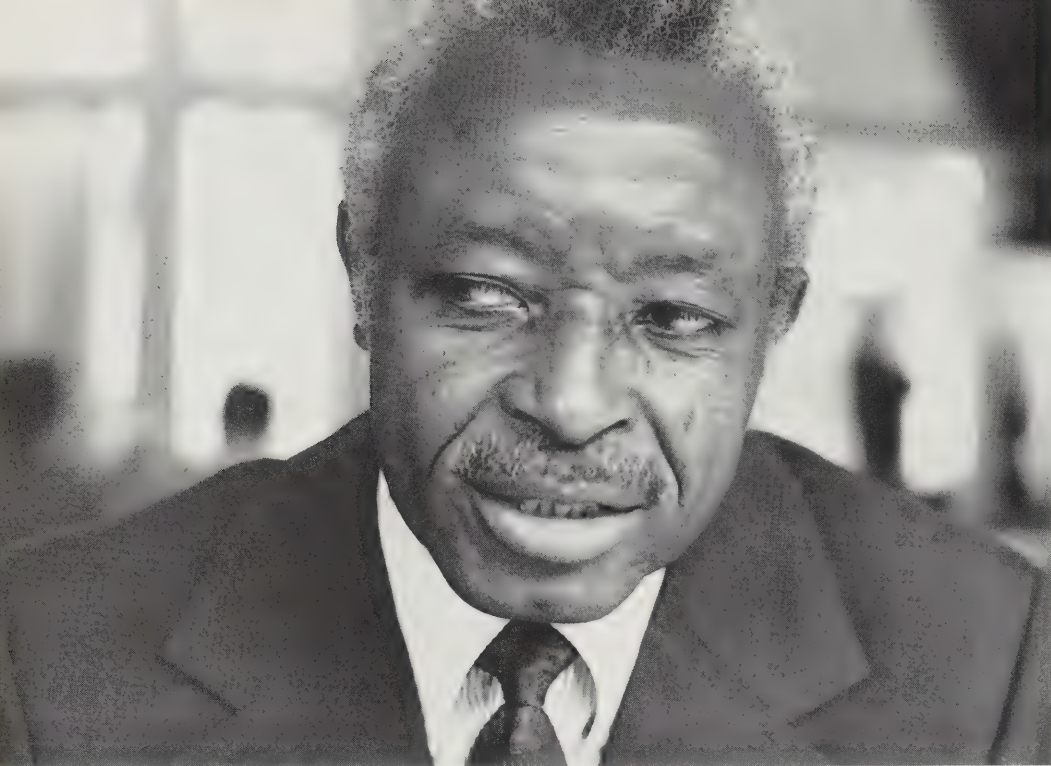
Nkumbi was tapped to join the emerging government, "to help set up some sort of structures to provide services. Apparently people saw something in me that I didn't see in myself."

The situation was confusing and full of ironies for these Baluba Mennonites who weren't sure how to behave in public life—and when there were Mennonites among the Lulus, the opposing tribe.

For four years Nkumbi headed the political office in that area and was assigned all protocol functions. He reflects now on the uneasy resolution he found within himself during that time. "I saw myself as a believer, working in the government, in the church, and in my profession.

"From the beginning, missionaries





“The future  
is my biggest worry.  
I am afraid.  
How will I be able  
to take care  
of all these  
people?”

Mennonites live.

Because few western journalists are permitted into Zaire, the world—and the global church—know little of the country’s desperate circumstances. With no tone of pouting in his voice, Nkumbi assesses his people’s experience this way: “I feel like we’re sort of at the end of things. We hear, well, it didn’t work at that other place, so we won’t bother trying it here. It seems like our church hasn’t been taken very seriously, as though we are exiles in our own country.”

While Nkumbi professes, “I have never looked back or second-guessed my decision to leave the bank and work for the church,” he also confesses, “The future is my biggest worry. I am afraid. How will I be able to take care of all these people?”

Nkumbi thinks small these days. Yet even so, he wonders what will happen. “People see the church as an agent of development. We need help to put material and practical structures in place. We don’t need big projects, but small help so people can learn to take care of themselves. We don’t want to continue as beggars. We need help to be able to help ourselves.

“We need seeds for planting. Who will play the intermediary? Is there a sister church who could help us buy seeds and get them home? It’s not very complicated. There are many things we could find in the southern cone of Africa—veterinary supplies for our livestock and chicken, for example. Are there sister churches who could help?”

“We’ve tried to set up a chemical dyeing program with women, but we can’t get the liquids. It’s not hard. We’re just stuck. We need something to get ourselves started.”

didn’t explain what it meant to be a Mennonite. In fact, the Mennonite missionaries always called themselves ‘CIM,’ until the revolution. Then they said, ‘We’re Mennonites.’ We didn’t know what that was. It was only the elite who had any idea about what that meant. Now, through Mennonite World Conference I am beginning to understand what it is all about.

“Frankly, you people from the West throw away—waste—your religious heritage. Probably 75% of the Africans involved in leadership in Mennonite fellowships outside the West don’t really understand the Anabaptist stance. And there’s enormous value in it. What has impressed me about Anabaptism is that it is people trying to follow Jesus’ words, not just build a church to defend.”

The pull between church and career—and politics—has been an ongoing theme for this modern Mennonite. The church asked Nkumbi to work full-time for it, at the same time the bank asked him to return, in the time following the civil war. As the father of six children by then, Nkumbi was concerned about his income. “I didn’t know how the church could survive financially because we were all refugees.

“I went back to the bank, but with lots of questions. One day I was

alone at home and I turned on the radio. It happened to be a religious program, and I had the feeling the preacher was talking to me—about Jonah. He asked if, like Jonah, we didn’t want to answer God’s call because it looks difficult! He said, ‘You who are listening, have you made things right with God?’ I answered out loud, ‘No.’ Then I said, ‘I’ve been a rebel. I’m going back to the church.’” He had been at the bank for one year since the end of the war.

While Nkumbi believes he was called to work for the church, it has been a difficult, often bewildering, choice. “My extended family frequently asks me whether I think I’ve done the right thing. I feel like they are trying to discourage me, yet I understand they wonder because of the great physical needs.”

His task is nearly overwhelming. “At the moment I have responsibility for 26 children—13 of my own and 13 left to me by my cousin who died, who was also a Mennonite pastor. I have a heavy burden because I feel I’m not understood about our country’s situation. The conditions in which we live are so tenuous, especially here in the interior where it’s hard to get around. And the social situation is deteriorating faster than we can respond.” This is a country where more than 135,000



# “US” and “THEM” *Together*

by David Leaman

I have two snapshots of Tabitha and me. In the first, I am an infant. She is holding me at her side with a sling of cloth tied around her neck. The second, a “reunion” shot taken more than 20 years later, shows us arm-and-arm, with me slightly hoisted. A large, strong woman, Tabitha was playfully proving—I remember with a smile—that she



could still lift me up.

Many worlds separate Tabitha and me. I have known the soft comforts and exciting opportunities that come from being close (enough) to the sources of power and plenty in affluent America. I’ve gone to schools that gave me a good education, and I have a job that is very rewarding. I eat heartily and travel widely.

Tabitha, by contrast, has known the challenges and hardships that come from being on the most faraway edges of a dramatically unequal world. A poor Bantu in the sad land of Somalia, she is a marginal citizen in a marginal country. (Talk about a double burden.) “Power” and “plenty” are foreign words for her.

Tabitha is African; I am Euro-American. She is old; I am young. She is female; I am male. She plants crops; I read books. She is poor; I am rich. Continents divide us.

Yet something inside me wants to claim Tabitha as part of my family—and to be included in hers. I wish to share our food and laughter at the same table. I want to be brave enough to relinquish some power and to share the plenty. Is that dreaming?

Perhaps. But for me, such dreams are the best way I know of fighting the frightening tendency—accentuated in our current world—to define each other as “us” and “them.” Serbs and Croats; Jews and Muslims. “Assimilable” immigrants (English-knowledgeable Europeans) and “problem” immigrants (repression-fleeing Haitians). Workers and welfare recipients. People of color and people of pallor. Gays and straights. Men and women.





And so on.

We live in a world where there is a lot of emphasis on who's *not* going to be invited into *our* homes.

But do closed doors and short dining room tables really make us happier and more secure?

Does such exclusion enrich our lives—or our meals?

Think of how boring our menus would be were it not for the influence of the Italians and their pastas, the Indians and their curries, the Poles and their sausages, the Mexicans and their burritos, the Chinese and their stir-fries, the French and their sauces, the West Africans and their stews, and on and on.

Think of how poor our society would be if immigration to America had stopped with the English and how rich we might have been had the European voyagers tried to partner with, rather than destroy, the inhabitants of this beautiful land.

Think of how much better off we *all* would be if, instead of thinking of “us” and “them,” we just thought of “us.”

So how do we begin to break down the barriers that inhibit us from sharing meals and material and lands?

I am reminded of the wisdom of the novelist—and orphan—James Michener, who was raised near Doylestown, Pennsylvania, by a farm family whose surname he adopted. Michener knew nothing about his biological parents, and this led him once to reflect, “I’ve never felt in a position to reject anybody. I could be Jewish, part Negro, probably not Oriental, but almost anything else. This has loomed large in my thoughts.”

The family-less like Michener and the loving families that make them theirs may know the secrets that could help solve many of our most wrenching social and supra-national problems.

But better than becoming orphans to arrive at this insight would be for all of us to enlarge our “families” and to extend our tables. We could add sisters and brothers and uncles and aunts and mothers and fathers and children from all over the place, from many neighborhoods and regions and nations, and share our food together.

That brings me back to Tabitha.

Last year, many months before Somalia became a stylized showpiece of suffering and “rescue” in the window of the world, I learned that Tabitha had died.

Of starvation.

The present tense becomes past. And Tabitha will not be able to join the thanksgiving meal I dream of. For her, food ran out.

But I will always remember and treasure the brief time I was able to spend with Tabitha as an adult, during that visit five years ago with my church-worker parents to my early-childhood southern-Somalia home. In her mud-and-thatch house, Tabitha sang—her voice husky and deep—hymns of worship and praise.

That woman can still lift me up.

And, in my dreams, I feast with her. Around a big table. With all of our favorite foods. Until we are full. And the world is fair.

Something  
inside me  
wants to claim  
Tabitha  
as part of  
my family—  
and  
to be included  
in hers.

*David Leaman, Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a political science instructor at Muskegon (MI) Community College.*

*Reprinted by permission of Grand Rapids Magazine.*

# Irresistible!

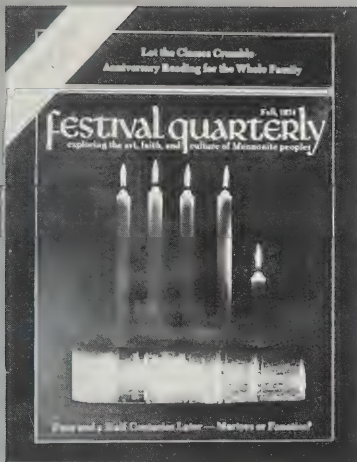


Even the postman can't resist reading *Festival Quarterly*.



# FESTIVAL Quarterly

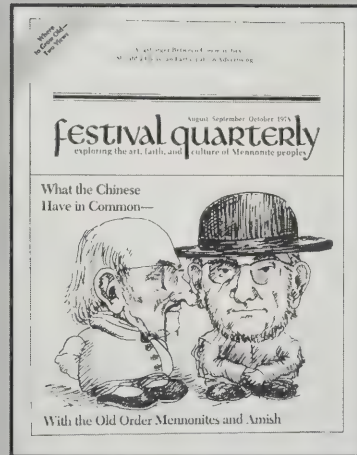
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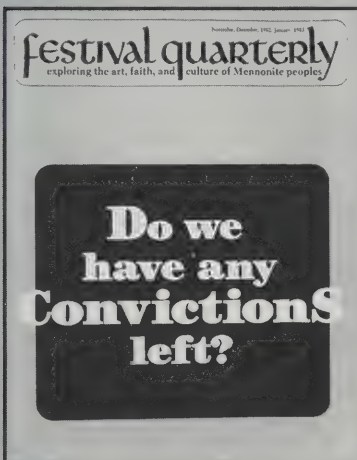
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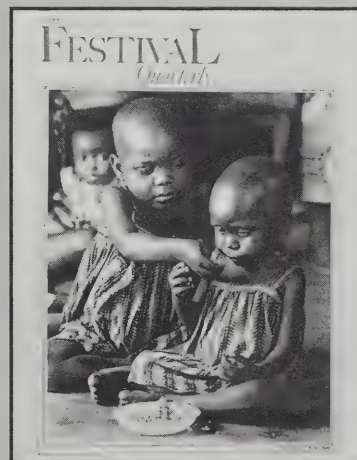
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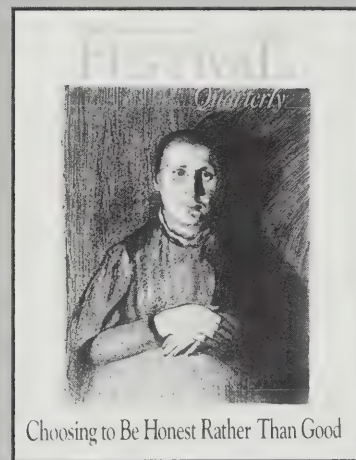
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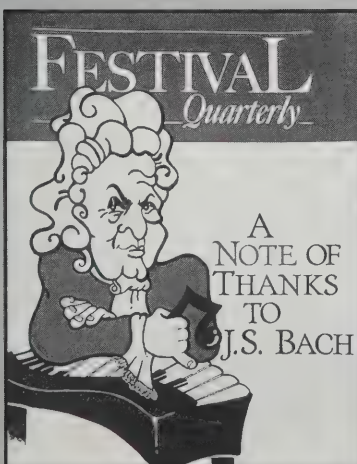
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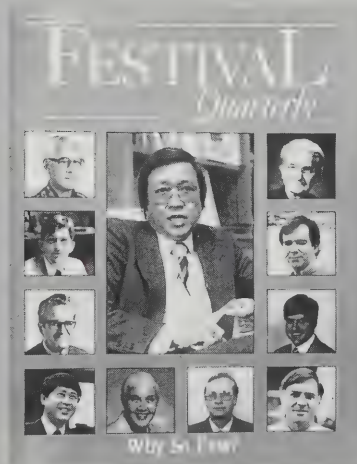
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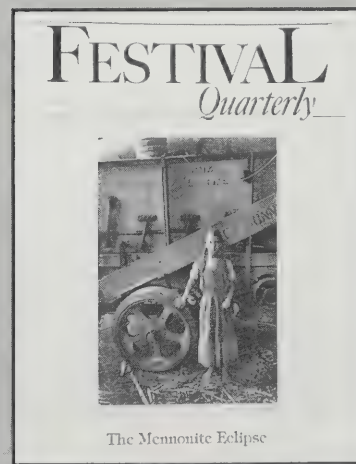
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# God Never Visits an Empty Space

by Charles Christano

I was rather worried on my way to a village church. My watch told me that we only had twelve minutes before the worship began. But my Javanese friends seemed to have all the time there was, walking and chatting at ease. More than once they told me to wait. "Do not hurry, it is still early!"

We were late, yet not late! The Joglo building (a typical Javanese style of architecture) where we were to assemble was almost deserted. There were but eleven people. We would wait nearly another hour before the hall was filled. I was late by almost one and a half hours, but everybody was relaxed.

"Why did you tell me that the worship starts at 7:00 when actually it does not begin until 9:00?" I asked my host.

"Well, sir, for most of us, our watch is the sun! And many of us have to walk for miles."

But they could start earlier, couldn't they? I discovered these people have no specific word for being "too late." They got the concept from foreigners. So they have had to invent a phrase in order to express it, such as, "Being left by the train or by the bus."

In the service there were only a few who wore trousers and skirts. Most of them were wearing sarongs, faded shirts, T-shirts, or kebaya. Very few wore shoes; most of them had sandals. And they took off either their shoes or sandals outside the hall. If they have an audience with a high-ranking official they do just that, they explained. What else should they do to worship the almighty God? There were no chairs or



FQ/Merle Good



pews. Everybody squatted.

These people liked singing, so they sang many songs. Some were familiar translations such as "Holy, Holy, Holy" and "Come, Thou Almighty King," but in a very slow tempo. Some of their music was on a pentatonic scale. In other songs the rhythm was different. Some of us encourage our Javanese friends to utilize original Javanese songs. But some Christian friends from the city find it difficult to affirm singing, and even harder to accept the rhythmic hand-clapping which accompanies the songs. The reason? The music reminds them of the Ketoprak, a Javanese drama, or even worse, a tayuban, which is a folk dance usually accompanied with erotic movements, done by many couples.

I went to Kalimantan (Borneo) with a small number of colleagues to help "start" our mission outreach there. But some of my friends were not ready for the surprises that lay in store for us. I was asked to help baptize many new believers, Kantu Dayaks.

The hut where we had our fellowship was a public meeting house in the kampong (village). At the gate we saw ornate decorations made of young coconut leaves, wild flowers, and colored papers. Inside there were a few pews and rattan mats. On the wall behind the pulpit hung song sheets written in giant letters so that everybody could read and sing. The translations were their own, using their own images. Those of us from Java felt rather strange. I even overheard one friend who did not want to join the rest, hard-headedly singing *our* version of the songs. When I later asked why, he chided me that I was compromising! I was not faithful!

Nor could some of my friends believe me when I baptized our Dayak friends differently. I did not have on my black clerical gown which I always wear for such an occasion in the city church in Java. Instead I wore a plain batik shirt and no shoes! When we gave our reports and showed some slides to our colleagues in Java, there were a lot of protests, mainly from church leaders! I was called unfaithful to our common practices. They charged me with harsh words. They suspected that I was trying to start a different denomination. These new ethnic groups are not considered genuinely Mennonite simply because they do not wear the same kind of dress we do. They do not sing the same songs we sing. They do not use the same liturgy we use.

When some of us heard that our Dayak friends still drink tuak (a domestic strong drink made of fermented rice), we were shocked! They were to be disciplined! They should not be baptized in the first place. But many of us do not know their culture. It is the Dayak custom to have tuak for any important occasion such as a wedding, celebrating baptism, or during harvest time. These people want to share their great joy with others. Now, how do we give new direction to the new believers about their social life? Shall they completely refrain from drinking or can

they drink moderately, without getting drunk?

I have found out that in our churches in Indonesia, we have multicultural fellow believers. It is not always easy to accommodate others because we tend to think that *we* are the genuine Mennonites. We think that everybody has to follow our ways of dressing or our sense of what color is "biblical." When I was confronted with many different ways of doing things, I became aware that what I thought was the right way of doing things happened to be imported from the West. I was blinded by how foreign I had become until I met options my other Indonesian believers have. And I want to thank God for those different things. I learned that they are not necessarily wrong. Many of those strange things are just skin-deep; not wrong but different! There should be room for differences. We are enriched because of the varied expressions that we have.

Yes, we have much tension. But I call it dynamic tension that stretches us for growth. And love has the capacity for much growth. I believe that God is open to many expressions of faith. And he never visits an empty space. He did not come to a vacuum when he came to Bethlehem. He was willing to be wrapped in the Jewish culture. And if he is to visit any given culture, he is willing to condescend, to stoop, to become like one of the lowest of the low. So why do we not make ourselves also open to differences?

I know our problems are nothing new. Peter and Paul had difficulties. They too had to deal with what were essentials and what were peripherals.

We should not misread statements such as, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free . . . for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28). For Paul who was a Pharisee had to learn what it meant to be in Christ. "For though I am free from all men. I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law . . . to the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some" (I Corinthians 9:19-23).

I have only spoken here about a tiny section of my people—Indonesians. What a mosaic of culture the Mennonites and Brethren in Christ around the world are! How challenging and perplexing the real situations are, but, at the same time, how wonderful it is to realize that our Father God is bringing many and still many more people, real people with their different cultures, to join his peoplehood. We are all his; we are all God's people. And he loves us all.

*Charles Christano is an Indonesian Mennonite church leader and past president of Mennonite World Conference.*

*This article first appeared in the Summer 1984 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# Could Our Faith Survive Life in OUTER SPACE?

by J. Lawrence Burkholder

The impact of life in outer space would depend upon the forms of life discovered. It would be one thing to discover simple life forms and another thing to discover or be discovered by rational or supernatural beings. To find bacteria on Mars would probably do no more than encourage speculation about more complex life forms, given the hypothesis of evolution. But to discover higher life forms would make a major impact upon faith—most likely negative and possibly devastating, unless one were to be informed by angel-like creatures or redeemed beings that they, too, had somehow experienced the grace of God.

Much would depend upon what the “little green beasts” were like—whether they were intelligent, superrational, intuitive, social, benevolent, fierce, shaped like human beings or mammoth bats, or little round butterball “schmoos!” Who knows?

The mathematical probability of finding and communicating with “rational beings” from outer space is low. This is not to say that they do not exist, but the problems inherent in the vastness of space and modes of communication make it quite unlikely that this problem will pass beyond the speculation stage in the foreseeable future. To be sure, some astronomers have speculated about extraterrestrial life, and radio monitoring facilities have been constructed. But at this stage, the evidence of higher life forms is nil; therefore, one may even question whether discussion of this sort belongs to the realm of science.

Possibly the best one can do is to

state the nature of the issue for faith. The problem would be the problem of relativity. Christianity has made claims of an exclusive nature concerning the significance of the world, the history of the Jews, the Person of Christ, and the course of human history. The problem would be how to extend these claims given a universe filled with beings that are not only unaccounted for by Christian faith, but which present rival sources of meaning.

Suppose we were to find beings with superior intelligence, utopian societies, advanced science, higher cultures, and possibly super- or extra-sensory knowledge. Would we then look to Christianity as the source of truth and righteousness? Of course, they could be malevolent beings, just as sinful or more so than humankind. In that event, Christians would bring to them, if communication would permit, the message of the grace of God as revealed by Christ.

Oddly enough, space fiction used to present flying saucer “people” as people to be feared. But those were the days when Western society looked to its own achievements with great confidence. In more recent days, fictional representations of extraterrestrial creatures are frequently messianic. They are seen as good or innocent beings who may show us the way.

If it is correct to say that the nature of the problem is relativity, it should be pointed out that, in principle, this would be nothing new. Christianity has struggled with the problem of relativity ever since the first century—historical relativity, metaphysical relativity,

cultural relativity. During the course of history, Christianity has been challenged by many philosophies, cultures, sciences, and political powers. But Christianity has survived—sometimes by accommodation. The discovery of higher life on another planet would simply mean that the context of the problem of relativity would be enlarged. The problem would no longer be limited to historical relativity but would be extended to cosmic relativity.

Oddly enough, the New Testament would seem to be at least formally prepared for such a challenge. For in many passages of the New Testament, Jesus is declared to be Lord of “heaven and earth,” and in Ephesians and Colossians, Christ is cosmic. He is Creator and Sustainer of “all things” (Eph. 1:10; Col. 1:15-17). Furthermore, to a New Testament writer, the thought of extraterrestrial beings was not in itself startling. This was the way people in pre-scientific periods thought. To make angelology serve apologetic purposes in a scientific age would be to stretch the hermeneutical principles beyond endurance and would probably convince very few people.

Personally I am not too much concerned about whether our faith can survive life in outer space. I am more concerned about the survival of faith “in this present age.”

*J. Lawrence Burkholder is a philosopher, former faculty member of Harvard Divinity School, and past president of Goshen (IN) College.*

*This article first appeared in the November, December, 1978, January, 1979 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# The Computer and The Cookstove

by Keith Helmuth

The removal  
of the stove  
from our home  
would be like  
the loss of  
a family member.

Some people seem determined to prove that human beings are just complex machines. Martin Minsky of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, for example, is fond of saying that the brain is just a computer made of meat. He looks forward to the direct linkage of computer and brain into a new intelligence.

I am not opposed to a blending of meat and microchips, cells and silicon, plasma and plastic, but I suggest that if Professor Minsky and his colleagues think the ultimate link between humans and their inventions will be the hookup of computer to brain, they have overlooked the relationship between the human householder and the latest generation of woodburning stoves.

I have been thinking this over carefully, and only the bicycle, the walking stick, and cross-country skis have bonds with humans that can compare with the cookstove. You may wonder how these tools of mobility and exercise are related to the cookstove. I am assuming the householder's full commitment to the discipline of woodburning: finding, felling, bucking, splitting, hauling, stacking, woodbox-filling, stove-loading, pipe- and chimney-cleaning, ash removal and spreading ashes on icy driveway or spring garden. Like biking, walking, or skiing, this adds up to a pretty good program of exercise, which is the foundation of human well-being.

Need I point out the regimen imposed by the computer? Basic physical inertness. So there you have it—a clear victory for the woodburning cookstove.

A still more persuasive argument I can advance is to point out that the removal of the stove from our home would be like the loss of a family member. Not only does the stove provide a sense of

warm companionship but, like a person, it must be cared for. The dog and cats obviously regard it as a best friend. It may be too much to say that the stove has personality, but it certainly has character.

I realize some computer devotees regard their equipment as a kind of exogenous brain. And I have heard about a woman who was legally married to her Cadillac. But in my judgment, neither of these admirable efforts to heal the rift between biology and mechanics comes close to the accomplishment of two Amish brothers from Aylmer, Ontario, in designing and building my stove.

If you regard computers as the essential tool for a progressive

lifestyle, I invite you to take the following test. The next time an ice storm brings down trees and power lines, plunging your region into darkness, make your way to a neighboring farmhouse that has an airtight woodburning cookstove. Enter the ambience of its radiant aura. Hear the singing teakettle. See the steaming mittens on the overhead drying rack. Observe the cat asleep on the sheepskin rug. Imbibe the nostril-warming air laden with an olfactory rainbow of home-cooked foods. Put your boots behind the stove, next to the hot water tank now bubbling with the making of evening baths.

The radio report is for sleet and wind-driven snow to continue all night. Nothing on wheels will move in the morning. Someone drops a shirt over the television in mock respect for the dead. The hot mulled cider is ready. The popcorn begins its dramatic transformation from inedible to edible. Out come the harmonica and banjo.

Step back with a mug of cider in hand, taking in the scene. Think of the nearby city, with the fragile threads by which it hangs now snapped. Look at the woodburning cookstove and observe the nurturing, festive, communal spirit engendered by its presence. Feel love rise in your heart, encompass the room, and return to settle in your mind. The tie between human creatures and human artifacts is clear.

Good luck, Martin Minsky. I'll be thinking of you when it's time to reload the stove.

*Keith Helmuth has developed a small-scale, diversified farm in New Brunswick, Canada. He writes out of "a background of ecological and social concern."*

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# How Lena Got Set Back

A short story by Sara Stambaugh

Lena's first husband, Isaac, hadn't much in the way of material goods. In fact, as Lena's cousin Sike said, he was grub poor, but he soon made up for his earthly poverty by inheriting a heavenly mansion, though he left behind a daughter, wife, and no hopes of setting them up.

Lena did better on her second try. She was in her thirties and still had a sparkle which even plain clothes couldn't dull. She pulled her hair back into a bun under her covering, but she made sure that it waved nicely over her forehead. Though her skirts were over her knees, a shapely calf showed through her dark stockings above the black shoes, and after several years of widowhood her tidy print dress (usually in an attractive lavender sprig) worked itself into a lace-edged V over the properly caped bodice. The other ladies gaped at first, but after the first Sunday, the younger ones began to imitate the Widow Burckhardt's innovation. It wasn't long till she'd got herself a second husband.

This one was well set up, though the church people whispered to each other at how an old, godly bachelor could be caught so easily. She'd chased him on a bus tour, they said, and only caught him when his donkey stumbled half-way down the Grand Canyon, where he had no one from the community to help him.

But get him she did, and shortly the Widow Burckhardt was Mrs. Jacob Eby and set up with her daughter Lillie in a fine house in

Strasburg. And Jake too, of course, since it was his house and crammed with furniture from his family: a set of six arrowback chairs to go round the extension table when some of the eight extra boards were put in for family dinners, extra chairs from his grandparents in miscellaneous patterns, and two special ones painted in Gaudy Dutch, yellow with tiger strips and big pink roses over the back. And that was only for the dining room.

As for the house, it was in the village, brick and substantial and verandahed. Lena saw that Lillie had piano lessons in the front parlor and smiled over the other ladies while she sat on the women's side during church.

Then Jacob died. Lena switched to blacks, but she wasn't prostrate with grief when she arrived at church the first Sunday. One by one the ladies in the cloakroom kissed her cheek. Gleaming in her new mourning, she prodded Lillie and moved lightly past the solid women and dutiful pecks, then sat through Sunday service while the preacher of the day made special mention of her tribulation and called for prayers.

It was only with the funeral and reading of Jacob's will that her vision of the world changed. Jacob had left all his worldly goods to the Mennonite school. She and Lillie were penniless.

Lena's first reaction was incredulity. At fourteen, Lillie was

too young to realize what had struck, but Lena did. The church ladies came by and patted her hand, smiling smugly and staring at the wave in her hair and the scandalous neckline. Lena stared back and accepted their condolences. Then she made a trip to town and hired a lawyer to break Jacob's will.

She and Lillie were dutifully in the front parlor when the delegation arrived from church. Lillie was practicing and broke off in the middle of *The Poet and the Peasant* when the knock came. The girl rose at her mother's nod to answer the formal knock at the parlor door. A knot of self-conscious men straggled into the room, the four preachers who circulated about Strasburg, Kinzers, Paradise, and Hershey, with Deacon Eby and Bishop Sam Hershey leading the way. Self-consciously, they eased themselves into Lena's satin parlor furniture and the yellow chairs she and Lillie brought in from the dining room.

Bishop Henry stared at Lena. He was a vigorous elderly man who retired from farming several years back after his son settled enough to take over. The other younger men were clean-shaven, but he carried the authority of a full grey beard, though his lip was clean. Mennonites didn't wear mustaches.

Bishop Hershey sat himself carefully in one of Lena's satin chairs. The other men stared at her patterned carpet, but he looked her



up and down, from her waved pompadour to her shapely black ankles. Then he cleared his throat. "Sister Lena," he said, "I and these godly men have come to speak to you."

"Lillie," Lena said, "maybe you'd better see to the kitchen." Glancing over her shoulder, Lillie moved to the varnished swinging doors that opened to the back of the house. "And see that the beans don't burn," added Lena, as her daughter disappeared.

The men around her gave a collective sigh, and Lena turned to Bishop Hershey. "Now tell me what you're after," she said. The other men kept their eyes fixed at the floor, but Brother Hershey again cleared his throat. Focusing on her eyes, he leaned forward. "Sister Lena," he said, "some dealings of yours have come to our attention. The congregation has sent us to investigate what may be a serious, a very serious backsliding."

"Oh," said Lena. Reacting to the pressure from the bishop's stare and the careful breathings from around the room, she pulled her ankles back against the rungs of the chair.

"You know, sister," the bishop continued, his eyes trained on her waved hair, "that we are forbidden certain actions."

"Of course, Brother Hershey," Lena breathed, drawing her legs in further and fidgeting with the crocheted edgings on her hankie.

"It has been called to our attention," continued Bishop Hershey, his voice rising as Lena's limbs retracted, "that you have considered raising a civil suit against a member of our congregation."

Lena pushed forward in her chair and flashed out her ankles. "He's dead," she retorted. "And how else am I to look to that child out there?"

The men around the room looked at her, then once more forced their eyes against the carpet.

Bishop Hershey cleared his throat.

"God's way is separate," he said softly, and another sigh went round the room.

Lena stared up now, moving her legs as though she were a calf tied against the beams. "I know all that," she said, "but what else can I do?"

"Follow God's way," said the bishop. Lena looked at him, swept her eyes past the others, and laughed. The men who crammed the room glanced at her furtively, but the bishop stood up, "Lena Eby," he cried, his voice resonating from the piano, "you have turned your face against the congregation and chosen the way of the ungodly. Henceforth you will not join in our communion until you repent of your ways!"

Lena rose, too, as the words were pronounced, then followed dumbly as the group of men led by the bishop solemnly moved through the front door and out to the porch and beyond. As soon as they disappeared, the kitchen door swung open. "What does that mean, Mamma?" asked Lillie.

"It means I've been set back," Lena replied curtly. "Now look to those beans."

The beans got scorched and so did Lena. She continued to go to church faithfully, but the ladies in the cloakroom drew back and stopped their conversation while she hung up her coat and bonnet. Lillie continued to sit with the other girls in her Sunday school class, but Lena proudly walked the length of the church aisle, flashing her ankles at the men who huddled on the right, and sat by herself on the last bench on the women's side. At least her cousin Sike, for a few weeks, anyway, was seated opposite her on the men's side. When the sermon sounded too loudly against backsliders, he looked over and winked, and they grinned at each other across the aisle.

But while she was being ostracized, Lena's lawyer kept

busy. "If you hang on we'll break it," he said, when she visited him in his fancy office. She didn't know if he was worth trusting, but Lena held on, even when Lillie complained that her friends didn't whisper to her during prayers and ran from her in the break after Sunday school.

"That ain't nothin'," replied Lena, and went on to her next appointment with her lawyer. Her cousin was welcomed back to the congregation in a ceremony between Sunday school and church, when the bishop kissed his cheeks and said how fine it was to see true repentance. "And he got it for drinking," muttered Lena, but she combed out the waves in front of her covering and continued to march proudly up and down the church aisle.

Finally her lawyer called her to come to court. Lena crossed her legs smartly, and the judge found against her husband's will. Lillie wasn't there to applaud, because Lena wouldn't allow her daughter to witness a breach of church rules. But Lena stopped by Bishop Hershey's on her way home from court. "Bishop Hershey," she said, "I'm willing to admit my backsliding."

The bishop beamed at her while his wife stared from behind the door and clucked her tongue.

Lena was welcomed back to the congregation the following Sunday. She crossed her ankles and smiled at the preacher from the front bench, and when Bishop Hershey asked did she repent, she replied, "Most heartily." The bishop's wife had to bend down and give her the kiss of peace.

*Sara Stambaugh is author of I Hear the Reaper's Song and The Sign of the Fox. She is a professor of English at the University of Alberta.*

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# On Losing a Political Race

by Frank H. Epp

Mennonites don't like losers  
any more than anybody else.  
Even church statesmen  
have to be successful people.

The editor has asked me to write about politics and about losing, and to be very personal about it.

The politics in question are Canada's recent federal elections. In 1979 the Progressive Conservatives ousted the Liberals who had formed the government since 1963. In 1980 the Liberals were again returned.

I should have been part of the return, but I lost in my bid for election to the House of Commons. It was my second run as Liberal candidate in the rural-urban riding of Waterloo, population c. 100,000 with 70,000 eligible voters, of which about 51,500 went to the polls in both elections.

I lost both times—in 1979 by 155 votes. Actually, I lost not only these two times, but quite possibly in perpetuity, because almost every reference in the media identifies me as the one who was “defeated.”

The losses could be many. A friend asked me after the 1979 election: “Frank, has your role as a church statesman been enhanced?”

I had not thought of myself in those terms, but we proceeded to analyze the situation. Together we agreed that my position had suffered. For at least three reasons: I had entered politics. I had chosen a “questionable” party. And I had lost.

And losing was the bigger problem. Mennonites don't like losers any more than anybody else. Even church statesmen have to be

successful people. So we reasoned.

In some way I lost what I sought most in recent years—to be a mediator between contending parties in the Middle East and to be a spokesperson for maltreated minority groups. However, my book *The Israelis*, a companion volume to *The Palestinians* published in 1976, wasn't out yet (it appeared on book shelves 10 days after the election), and a well-organized extremist lobby, using a malicious letter-writing campaign and slanderous election-eve advertising quite possibly robbed me of that image and role in the public mind. Some say the agitators also lost me the election!

Be that as it may, winning and losing are really relative, depending on how one measures wins and losses.

For example, has the winner won if in 1980 he has lost most of the 5,665-vote margin he had in 1979, and has the loser lost if he has managed to all but close the gap?

Friends were gained, more than I ever had before! Over 20,000 people voted for me and 700 came forward to work for my candidacy, to telephone and canvass 40,000 households, donate over \$20,000, display hundreds of signs, and, in ways too many to list, promote the campaign.

Many of them say they would do it again, even if it meant losing again. That's loyalty and a priceless

friendship.

Jewish leaders came forward to offer brave support. Said one, a former member of Parliament from another political party, publicly for all to read: “There are some things persons cannot defend themselves against . . . I had to be defended by my Christian friends and, in the case of Frank Epp, it may be necessary that he be defended by a Jewish friend.”

Again, that kind of identification is worth more than electoral success. It can nurture one's soul for a lifetime.

There are other gains and rewards I could cite, such as new insights on the political process, on mass communication, and on the nature of the church's witness, as well as a renewed family partnership and conversation.

A significant ongoing political role arises from an ex-officio status as delegate to all conventions and executive board meetings of the party, including the leadership convention anticipated in the next few years.

All in all, I consider the running to have been worthwhile, even if only because I outran myself in more ways than one. It was a time of learning and maturation, an invaluable experience with which to face one's later years.

Most important for me has been growth in the conviction that, while many governments, in whole or in part, are of the devil,



Government itself is of God.

When he created an environment with a wealth of resources and a people to live in it, he had in mind an orderly relation between the people and those resources; the people with each other, and the created with the creator.

His creation, and the government he wanted, is in deep trouble. We now have 4.5 billion people scrambling for unevenly-shared, dwindling resources, and false gods everywhere are pretending infallibility and reaching for ultimate power.

And too many of his people, who claim to know somewhat of his will and governmental plan, are sitting on the sidelines getting all they can get for themselves, enjoying the luxury of every privilege and criticism, while assuming few of the risks and responsibilities.

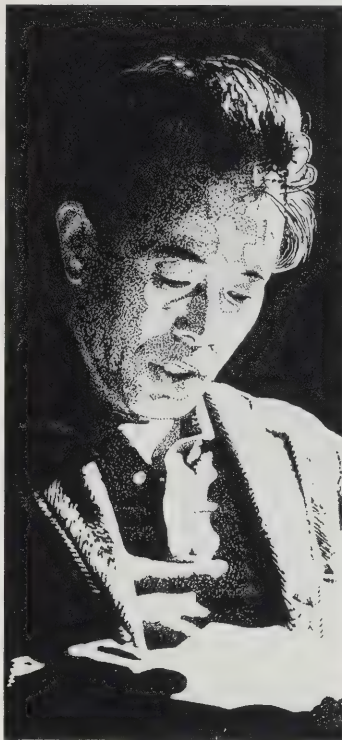
Will I do it again? It is too early to say, but of this I am sure. If I don't run again, it won't be because the conviction has worn thin.

On the contrary, the circumstances will have to be very powerful to overrule both the calling and the conviction. Winning isn't always essential, but participation in the process is. For me, at least, it has become an obligation.

*Frank H. Epp was an author, president of Conrad Grebel College (Waterloo, Ontario), and active in focusing Canadian Mennonite identity.*

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## Two Poems by Yorifumi Yaguchi



Art by Craig Heisey

### How to Eat Loaches

— Some people say raw loaches are good for the heart . . .

You just swallow  
the loaches living  
without chewing them.

They fall right  
into your stomach where  
they moan, struggle and

try to jump out.  
But they gradually become  
faint and still

like mice in a  
snake or a minority race  
in a society.

### Praying Mantis

This morning I saw a male  
praying mantis being  
eaten by his female.

I could almost hear his  
wild shout of ecstasy  
as his wife ate him

and his joy seemed to increase  
the more as his body was  
violently bitten along.

The complete trance of  
self-oblivion comes at the moment  
when his last part is bitten.

—Tonight when I am exhausted  
after our long  
and violent intercourse,

I think of the male mantis,  
wondering if his swallowed body  
was digested or still praying in her.

*Yorifumi Yaguchi is a poet, professor of American poetry, and Mennonite pastor in Japan.*

*These poems appear in the collection, Three Mennonite Poets (Good Books, 1986) and are reprinted from Festival Quarterly, August, September, October, 1982.*





# Cultivating All the Land

by David Luthy

to break down the generation gap. At the church services, young, unmarried Amish men are called upon to lead songs, and at work bees the men are encouraged to visit back and forth, regardless of age or marital status.

A high standard of courtship is another conviction held by our congregation. Believing that strong marriages make strong homes, which in turn make a strong church, we have always discouraged casual dating. Young people are taught to view marriage as a serious, lifetime commitment. Semi-monthly dating from 9 to 12 on Sunday evenings is the norm.

Have these convictions been tested? Oh, yes. There has been teaching to do and discipling. Today the convictions remain firm and the congregation growing, having divided into two congregations several years ago. In fact the courtship standards during the past 10 years have risen. Where 30 years ago a couple could (and a few did) marry at age 18 or 19, now our young people don't even begin dating until that age, resulting in more mature marriages.

In the past years our congregation's convictions about caring for our own people, not expecting the government to, have been tested. The local tax office has pushed for Amish participation in the Canada Pension Plan and Unemployment Insurance. Money is being seized, but people are not participating.

But I do not believe our Amish beliefs and way of life will ever be destroyed by such outward forces. It is the forces within that we must watch. Every group of any duration cannot live on the convictions of its grandparents. Each of us must make those convictions our own. There is an Amish saying, "The young people of today are the church of tomorrow." Is it any wonder, then, that our ministers and parents are so concerned about cultivating convictions in them?

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Well-kept, picturesque Amish farms are favorites for photographers, appearing on postcards, calendars, and magazine covers. A beautiful farm is not an accident—it is an accomplishment. It takes a lot of work to keep up the buildings and to cultivate the land. The loveliest part of any Amish farm is the combination flower and vegetable garden. Much hoeing is required to keep it clean, not just in one spot, but throughout. If too much time is spent in one place, soon weeds will be beyond control in another.

What is true for an Amish farm is also true for an Amish congregation. To be successful, it requires much work and a lot of convictions. If too much emphasis is placed on one conviction, another area will suffer. The sowing and the hoeing must be uniform. With careful cultivation by all concerned, laity as well as ministry, a congregation will prosper spiritually.

Our congregation is just completing its thirtieth year, having been founded by settlers from southern Indiana in 1953. I have lived here for half of the congregation's existence. One major conviction which the earliest settlers had was that young people, aged 16-21, should not have to go through a period of rebellion or sowing wild oats, so commonly experienced by young people in the older, larger Amish settlements.

From the beginning, our congregation has made a conscious effort to break down barriers or generation gaps between the married and the unmarried. The holy kiss is not given just by the older married men, but by all baptized members, male and male, female and female, regardless if they are married or not. At the Sunday evening singings, which are the traditional Amish youth gatherings, half a dozen married couples are also invited—not merely to act as chaperones, but



# A NEGLECTED GROUP

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## *the Olde Field Mennonites*

by Emerson L. Leshner

Until recently, Muppies (Mennonite Urban Professionals) were a neglected group among the Mennonites. However, they have been exposed to the point that it has seriously begun to challenge their humility. It is now time to focus on another group, the Olde Field Mennonites (OFM). While you may not have heard of this group, they are probably the largest subgroup of Mennonites.

OFM, like Muppies, have been leaving agricultural life in greater and greater numbers, but instead of moving to the city, they have stayed on the farm and simply changed their address from "Road" to "Drive" and "Route" to "Place." The OFM no longer swim in Musser's pond, but in Miller's pool. The OFM are suburbanites. Today there are probably more Mennonites who live in split-level or ranch homes than who live in farm and row houses combined.

The OFM like to live in developments (not neighborhoods) that have rural sounding names (hence, the name Olde Field Mennonites), maintain their lawns (not "mow their yards"), have a "great" or "family" room (not a den), and eat at Mr. Steak.

Initially, many of these people believed they were Muppies. They are not, however. This is evidenced by the fact that they shop at malls, have a Sears card, drive an American car, and read *Good Housekeeping* (in contrast to Muppies who shop downtown, have an American Express card, drive a foreign car, and read *Mother Jones*).

With regard to their religious behavior, OFM attend congregations that no longer have feet-washing but have fellowship meals; they do not have signs in their lawns that say "Prepare to Meet Thy Maker," but they do have Marriage Encounter bumper stickers; and (unlike other Mennonite groups, including Muppies) have even been known to wear white shoes and polyester clothing to church. If Muppies want to be known as simple and elegant, or humble and successful, then OFM want to be known as modest and fancy, or friendly and comfortable.

In recent years, the church has tended to focus either on urban Mennonites or farmers. As a result, task forces and 800 numbers have been established to

either straighten them out or help them out.

Meanwhile, the silent majority among Mennonites has gone unnoticed. Nobody questioned the OFM about what they were up to, or why they were up to it.

It has been relatively easy for OFM to move down the road, attend the same congregations, and believe that little has changed. Few seem to realize that the geography is the same but the context is quite different. Somehow OFM seem to believe that the supermarket equals the general store and that life "simply goes on." Either OFM live on an island surrounded by malls and fast food, or they have been modified by the surrounding context more than they are aware.

What does it mean to be an Anabaptist in suburbia—how are Olde Field Mennonites a "separate people"? While it is difficult to identify clear patterns of separation among the OFM, there are some ways that they can be distinguished from non-Mennonite suburbanites. For example, they wait until the end of the season to get the best buy on barbecue grills from J.C. Penney instead of insisting on a Webber, they don't buy (or read at the check-out counter) the *National Enquirer*, and their children listen to Amy Grant instead of Juice Newton.

Listed below are some questions to ponder while waiting in the supermarket line or watching "The 700 Club": What field are these people in? Are they in a new, old, foreign, or mission field? What really makes them different from their neighbors? Do they *want* to be different from their neighbors? Why do they still attend a Mennonite church? Will their children know why Grandma wore a covering or why Great-Uncle Jake never trimmed his beard? When will they put a steeple on top of their meetinghouse?

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It is 9:15 a.m. and I just rolled out of bed. A rather long night? No, actually, an exceptionally short one. At 2:30 a.m. there was a knock at the door and a voice calling, "James, James!" It was Preacher Alphonse coming to inform us that his elder brother Jacob had just died. Alphonse had gone to bed about 1:00 a.m. following a lengthy chat with Jacob across the path. And then came the news—his brother had died in his sleep. Alphonse was shaken.

Funeral arrangements were already underway and the question was being asked how Jacob's body might best be kept from decaying in the heat until family and friends could be contacted and make their way to Yocoboué for the week-long ceremony. There was only one solution: transport Jacob twenty kilometers to the morgue in Lahou II and embalm him . . . as soon as possible! Most of the time here I play the role of chauffeur and taxi driver; now I was being asked to become an undertaker as well. I picked up my car keys and headed for Jacob's courtyard where the entire village was assembling to mourn his passing.

The place was already crammed with wailers. Children's faces were painted with kaolin—a white paste—thought to protect them from evil forces released by Jacob's death. For fifteen minutes, I passed among family members offering condolence. Harrist church committee member, Dominique, confided to me that Jacob's death this night was no surprise to him; that at midnight, just before retiring, he had heard a pack of dogs racing and howling WOOO! WOOO! through his courtyard. He had gone to bed troubled, knowing that something was "in the air."

Alphonse interrupted us to announce that it was time to go, that the body would be brought and we'd be leaving. Jacob was wrapped loosely in a tattered sheet, dressed in death as one

# "Jacob, why did you do this to us?"

by James Krabill

usually saw him in life: no shirt, no shoes, only a pair of skimpy brown shorts. A group of women stretched him out in the back of our station wagon and three piled in around him, positioning themselves so as to prevent his bouncing about on the bumpy dirt road awaiting us. Alphonse and another church committee member climbed in the front and we were on our way.

I prayed silently that my car, acting up of late, would make the trip without incident. I knew how it would be interpreted should we break down en route. The last time I had transported a body, the father of the deceased girl had conducted a ceremony before departure. Opening a bottle of beer, he had emptied its contents on the ground next to my right front tire, all the

while beseeching his daughter already in the car to "Relax, don't do anything dumb . . . like taking revenge on the car's motor rendering it cold as your body"—terminating his discourse by opening the hood, spitting the last mouthful of warm beer on the motor, banging it shut and telling me, "Now it's time to go. Quickly!"

Having no desire tonight to face such a hassle on an isolated road at 3:00 in the morning, I held my breath and drove with care until arriving at our destination.

Pulling up to the clinic which houses the morgue, we were greeted by the sleepy-eyed night watchman who from all appearances had been doing anything but watching. How's come we were there, he wanted to know. "Our brother just died in Yocoboué. He's in the car," replied Alphonse. "Well, you can't leave him here in the middle of the night," was his response. "Come back tomorrow and we'll see what we can do."

No sympathy. No sensitivity. Only disinterest and bureaucratic delay . . . with one obvious purpose in mind—extracting a bribe from a family in distress. For a service theoretically government-paid! "Besides," he added, "we already have three bodies in the frig; the place is full. You can always lay your brother here on the porch till another body is removed. But otherwise . . . no use waiting around. There's no room left."

And so we pleaded for forty minutes while Jacob waited patiently in the car until finally, with much insistence—and a hint of a probable "token of gratitude"—the ice began to break. "Do you have the embalming fluid necessary for treating the body?" he asked us. "Well . . . no," we stuttered, unprepared. "Haven't you any on stock?" "On stock?" he chuckled. "Ain't nothing here on stock. Gotta bring your own." "And where does one get that," we



wanted to know. "At the pharmacy, tomorrow at eight . . . unless you've got 'contacts' who can wake the pharmacist in the middle of the night."

"Contacts"—the magic word in these parts for accomplishing anything. Luckily, we had them—several men originally from Yocoboué now with good jobs in Lahou II. So we joined Jacob in the car and began making the rounds, waking them up and asking advice on what to do next. Nearly two hours passed before we returned to the clinic with the fluid (two bottles at \$30.00 each) in hand.

The night watchman had become more congenial. He instructed me to transport the body some distance out behind the clinic to "the lab" and that the others would follow on foot. Arriving at the lab, I stopped the car and turned off the ignition. I sat in the darkness. Alone. With Jacob. Thinking . . . mostly about the latter.

Jacob's case was a sorry one. Son of Blagou André (one of Yocoboué's most dynamic preachers), nephew of N'Guessan Benoit (the church's present spiritual head), brother-in-law of Lakpa Simon (peacher, second in command), and elder brother of Beugré Alphonse (a rising star known throughout the region for "following faithfully in the steps of his father.")

The pressure on Jacob to conform was great. And Jacob was not the conforming type. Independent and slightly cynical—intolerable characteristics to small-town folk who require unquestioned uniformity—Jacob gradually grew disillusioned with the church. He turned ever more to smoking and drinking and eventually ruined his health.

The last time I had chatted seriously with him I asked him why he never came to church. His reason? Several years earlier he had purchased some white cloth to be made into a shirt and pants for church usage. When he took the material to the tailor, the latter

misplaced it. The next Sunday he tried going to church in clothes other than white (required by the Harrists) and was refused entry. Since then he had never returned to church and "had been unable to round up enough money to purchase the outfit necessary."

So clothes were keeping Jacob from regular church attendance. A rather pitiful excuse but I took him at face value. "And supposing I buy you shirt and pants . . . would you come back to church?" I had asked him. "Clothes are my only problem," he had reassured me and I had promised to procure them for him next time in Abidjan.

Now, with Jacob propped up silently behind me, that purchase would be unnecessary. Some Harrists say that white is worn in church because that is what will be worn in heaven. I had to wonder whether Jacob would be turned away from the pearly gates for lacking the right clothes.

When my companions finally arrived, I opened the trunk lid of the car. Jacob had become stiff and carried like a board. They laid him outside on the veranda, the only place with a light that worked. The women—his sister, his cousin, and a neighbor—massaged his body, bending back his curled fingers and loosening up stiffened muscles for the embalming process just ahead.

When they had finished, assistants came and began pumping Jacob full of formaldehyde. One bottle suspended above his waist was run via a plastic tube into his navel; the other was used for injections across his body until its contents were exhausted. The rest of us, family and friends, sat crouched around the edges in muted silence. Stunned by the finality of it all.

The embalming process completed, Jacob was wrapped in a sheet, laid on a stretcher and placed for storage in a fourth freezing compartment—which suddenly appeared out of nowhere

at just the right moment. (The night watchman upon discovering that it was Jacob, his "ole drinking buddy" who had just died, put on a mighty show of remorse. He made no attempt however to reduce the \$30.00 "token of gratitude" finally offered him as we left the grounds.)

It was 6:30 a.m. and the sun was peeking timidly through the towering baobab trees as we headed in silence back to Yocoboué. Whimperings could be heard as the village came into view and by the time we spilled out of the car into Jacob's over-crowded courtyard, the women's crying had swelled to shrieks of uncontrolled sobbing. Throngs of mourners gathered around us to hear how things had gone.

When all had been told, I excused myself, explaining to Alphonse that I'd be going home to get some sleep. Knowing he wouldn't be getting any, I wished him the Lord's strength.

At home, Matthew had just finished breakfast and was rushing out the door, ready to begin another day racing around the courtyard with his inseparable Muslim buddy, Mamadou. I sat down at the table with Jeanette and began recounting over hot coffee and fresh homemade bread where I'd been and what I'd experienced since my hasty departure some five hours earlier.

*James Krabill and his family are missionaries in Ivory Coast, West Africa.*

*This article is adapted from the one that first appeared in the August, September, October, 1983 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# SHOULD I TRAVEL

## *When the World Is Starving?*

by Arnold Cressman

There are good times. There are bad times. But the most confusing times are times when there is an unhealthy mixture of each. These times are like that. When a great many of the world's people are just about to close their grasp on the "good life," it turns out that "all curves lead to disaster." What looked like the "good life" comes up empty. Worse, living it is possible only at the expense of an indeterminate somebody. When a move in any direction might well be wrong, it is time for broader perspective.

As a boy on a hilly Ontario, Canada, farm, it was my lot to get the cows. Now how does a short ten-year-old find twelve contented cows on 164 rolling acres? He climbs the windmill. So my little sister asks, "What are you doing?"

I say, "Getting the cows."

And she says, "Up there?"

How do you explain "perspective" to a four-year-old?

There are many ways to get a clearer outlook in troubled times. One of the best I know is to get with people who have a totally different view of things. An Austrian farmer who appreciates a sunset from his corner of the Alps, a Dutch family who can't understand why one needs both cheese and ham in the same sandwich.

I have seen persons return to America after three perspective-focussing weeks of travel in Europe totally reoriented, knowing exactly where to find the cows. Part of this, admittedly, has to do with a rediscovery of one's roots—spiritual, ethnic, or both. They found how Christian love, brotherhood, community, and a simple lifestyle were deeply set in the very source of their faith.

But even if I have the high purpose of regaining perspective in a mixed-up world, how do I dare spend money at all when people are

starving? No one with sensible religious or moral scruples can dismiss the question lightly. The answer can best be found among the answers to related questions. How much travel? What kind? For what reason? And what will I do to help the starving if I don't go?

A categorical "no" to "shall I travel?" is an over-answer. It suggests that we give up completely in the face of unsolvable problems. Shall we trade every nonproductive effort for food? Would we really want a world without music, without drama, without art, and, in the end, without insight? These things help us to stay whole. So let us print a good book. Let us laugh with a child. Let us sing an exuberant song. Let us enjoy the enriching experience of travel. All of it with realistic perspective in times that are both good and bad.

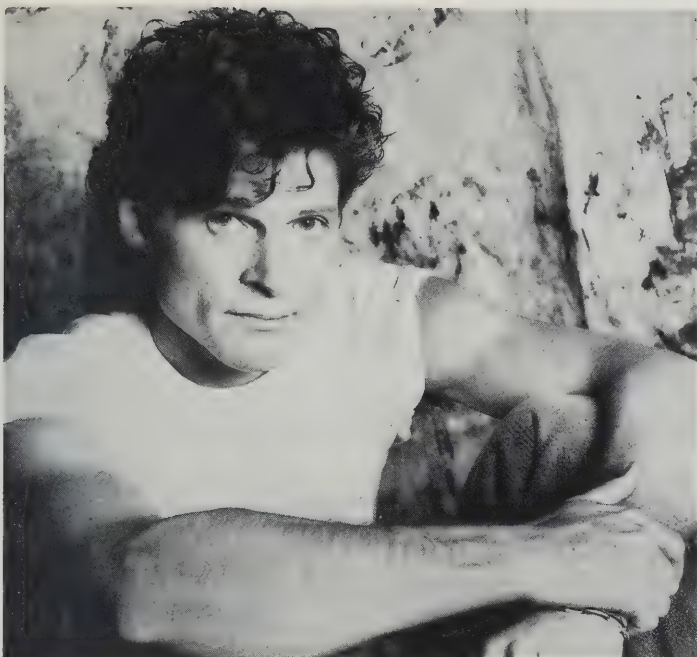
*Arnold Cressman, Mt. Pleasant, PA, is a co-founder and active partner in TourMagination.*

*This article first appeared in the May, June, July, 1975 issue of Festival Quarterly*

photo by Burton Buller







# I Had to Leave

by Jerry Derstine

I was raised in the Mennonite church. My father was a minister; my mother was a homemaker and minister's wife. After I joined the church at age 12, I tried to be a model Christian. As a young adult in the early 1970s, I called myself a "radical Mennonite." I married a Mennonite "girl," served in the Voluntary Service program, and wrote the song "Unity." Suddenly, at the age of 25, I left—the church, my wife, my job, my whole way of life.

As I look back now, some 15 years later, I can see clearly the patterns that led to this powerful explosion—my personal Vesuvius. Although many factors contributed to my development (my personality, my family's personality, the attitudes of society at large), the Mennonite church was the one part that defined the whole, the box into which everything else had to fit. Before I could become an emotionally healthy adult, it was necessary for me to break out of that box. I had to leave the church in order to be "saved."

The unspoken rules of my youth taught me that there were not only certain actions that were wrong, but that there were also feelings that were wrong. It was not only a sin to kill, it was a sin to hate, even to feel anger. I also learned that some careers and aspirations were unacceptable. Clearly, my dreams of success as a major league baseball player, and later as a pop music star, were inappropriate for a Mennonite. Indeed, the very word "success" was frowned upon.

So I coped with my unsuitable passions and dreams by holding them inside. I became skilled at repression and self-denial. However, deep beneath the peaceful facade, I was very angry. On a conscious level, I was unaware of that anger because I had become so adept at censoring my true feelings. When the lid blew off, in a euphoric though naive attempt to express all the feelings and aspirations that had been denied for so long, for a time emotion became my god. I regret that I

hurt those close to me in the process of my clumsy metamorphosis. But I was finally discovering the path of authentic existence, and for that I'm grateful.

My interpretation of an authentic existence means embracing my humanity, accepting all of my thoughts and emotions as part of me. It also means striving to develop my full potential, expressing and sharing my talents, not burying them. I believe that when we cultivate our abilities, working creatively to realize our dreams, and when we learn to love ourselves as we really are, we praise the Inventor more than when we make statements of faith.

For me, the path to authentic existence is long and steep. During the process of writing this article, I came to the realization that now my career is the box that defines . . . and confines me. My workaholism is a symptom of my incomplete emotional development. Because I have been so afraid of seeing the real me, I have become my work. I still censor my feelings, especially anger. And in response to anger from someone else, whether it's directed at me or not, I often become numb, incapable of empathy. Although the inhibiting emotional responses of my childhood linger, I am rededicating myself to discovering and accepting the realities of my humanness, a lifelong process.

I share my story, first of all, because I need to express the anger and frustration that I have felt as a victim of a repressive society. And second, I want to encourage the Mennonite church to continue the process of breaking down the walls and opening up the borders, while maintaining the attributes of peacemaking and service to humanity.

It is my hope that each Mennonite will learn to love and accept all that he or she is; that each will blossom as an individual; that each will embrace not only their "positive," but also their "negative" feelings, and learn from them, because denying emotion will surely not make it go away. I also hope that the Mennonite church will come to fully accept those who are not so clearly "Mennonite" in their cultural background, race, lifestyle, or career choice, so that all who choose to be Mennonites will be able to find emotional maturity and self-fulfillment within the church.

*Jerry Derstine lives in Nashville and writes pop and country songs under the name J.D. Martin.*

*This article first appeared in the Winter 1990 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# Making Peace With the Artist in Myself

by Eva Beidler

Mine is a story that may sound familiar to other Mennonite-related artists. I was raised on a small farm near Quakertown, Pennsylvania. We had a large family—eight children—and my father worked in a poultry dressing plant to support us. He was an unsalaried minister and bishop in the Franconia Mennonite Conference. My mother had her hands full raising us children, along with managing the farm—milking a cow, tending pigs, fixing fences, and husking corn—while Dad had ministerial responsibilities, such as visiting the sick, attending meetings, and staying up, at times until 3 a.m. Sunday, to prepare sermons.

Very early on, it seemed that I was bent toward art. I entertained myself by drawing in church. Long before I knew about Georgia O'Keeffe and her enlarged flowers, I was using colored chalk to create big flowers on our kitchen blackboard. I decorated a box of stationery and sold it to my college-bound brother for two dollars. I entered a church-sponsored poster contest and won. I remember being introduced to family friends as the “artist of the family.”

Being artistic didn't seem to be a problem until I got older. Our family went to public school, and in junior high I was beginning to feel extremely self-conscious and to experience pain at being so different from my peers. I felt safe and accepted within my church community, but in school I wore a strange white hat on my head and had to continually answer curious, as well as demeaning, questions about it. I couldn't talk with my classmates about TV. We didn't party like “the world.” We didn't get newspapers or magazines to keep us informed of world events. We didn't dress according to current styles. It was, simply, a constant emotional struggle to interact with my peers, because it seemed that I always had to be explaining why I could or couldn't do certain things. Added to this, there was an expectation that I “witness” to my school friends.

In my junior and senior years of high school, I took an art major and was able to spend considerable time each day in the art room. It became obvious that I had some natural ability, and because I was affirmed in this I got involved with art-related extracurricular activities. I won awards for my art and recognition for my contri-

butions. This was good for me because it helped me to feel more accepted and a part of things—but, at the same time, it did not resolve the conflict I felt with being so different. Involvement demanded more, rather than less, interaction with others. I was scared to death at being so immersed in art classes, with the most avant-garde students of my school. I wore my covering, and my friends wore the freakiest clothes and hairdos they could come up with.

Graduation neared and my art teacher approached me about applying to art schools. I burst into tears and declared that I couldn't go to art school and become an artist, because I was a Mennonite. She tried to convince me that religious people could be artists and dug out a book on the Shakers to support her case.

You could say that I fled the perils of the art world when I headed for Eastern Mennonite College to major



Photos by EQ/Kenneth Pellman



in sociology. My two years at EMC were hard ones for both my family and me. Like many young people at this stage in their lives, I was searching for my identity, perhaps one separate from my past. I was beginning to choose a lifestyle which was out of line with the teachings of my church. Something or someone, it seemed, needed to be blamed. I remember my mother saying that she felt art took me away from God. After all, art had been pinpointed as making me different even within my family—so perhaps it was the culprit.

Did art take me away from God? What was it about art that was threatening, that it was associated with my apparent rebellion? For more than a decade, I struggled with the nagging supposition that art indeed was bad for me and, furthermore, that maybe I was “bad” because of it.

As I look back, I know art wasn’t bad for me. It was, in fact, something God created within me. It was part of my nature. I believe I was, at the time, a victim of negative stereotypes and misconceptions about art.

Viewed through the eyes of my conservative Mennonite tradition, art seemed the epitome of selfishness. It was associated with “the self”—personal images made for others to see. What good did that do? It certainly couldn’t feed, clothe, or house anyone. Moreover, only rich people could afford to buy an original piece of art. A career in art seemed far from what I had been taught about Christians needing to be servants to the downtrodden of the world.

Art was also so showy—it was made primarily to be looked at. I was taught that one should not call attention to oneself in any way. And what if a person became good at art? What about the danger of flaunting one’s skill and becoming proud? And what about the art of the ages with all its nudity? The body, in my tradition, was to be covered, certainly not glorified. I could hear my father preach over and over again how everything we do must be to the honor and glory of God—how we make a living, how we dress, how we build houses and church buildings, and so on. Values running deep in the Mennonite tradition—modesty, simplicity, service, humbleness, separateness from the world—all seemed vaguely at stake when I thought about being an artist and trying to market my work.

I spent years sorting through my feelings and beliefs about art. In time, I felt ready to handle the art school scene and I attended Corcoran School of Art in Washington, D.C. Corcoran offered basic fine arts



training, but it did not answer my questions about *why* I should be an artist. Faculty and students seemed preoccupied with doing something distinctive enough to make a name in the art world. I certainly wasn’t after fame and fortune. I wasn’t even sure what I wanted to paint. The timing still wasn’t right.

I hopped around in the job market, working in photo, framing, and gallery shops and eventually finding my way into the geriatric setting as a recreation director. In geriatric literature I discovered the concept of art therapy. I felt I had finally found a way to use art as a means to serve others, so I headed back to college to finish undergraduate work and to George Washington University for a graduate degree in art therapy.

Ironically, it was art therapy which taught me to



value art for its own sake and for my sake, as well as for service to others. If art was good for others (and I had to believe this to become an art therapist), it had to be good for me. I became convinced that self-expression of all kinds, including graphic symbolism, was indeed important. I learned that each person had a unique style and personal symbolism, from the brain-damaged, institutionalized elderly patients I worked with, to the military top brass who developed alcohol problems, to the so-called normal person who made an ordinary picture. Each person's work was worthy of my respect, study, and appreciation. Art was a beautiful and tangible means of access to inner feelings and life experiences.

In art therapy, it is widely held that a therapist should be a practicing artist, in order to know firsthand about art techniques and materials, as well as to be aware of the rigors of the creative process. I took a watercolor class with a professor of mine. He was enthusiastic, loose, and expressive in style, and he seemed to enjoy taking risks. I was hooked, and this time around I was ready to try to show and sell my work. I still didn't know whether people would want to buy my paintings. I worried about stretching our family budget to buy paints, paper, and frames. I feared that I would sign up to do a show but not have enough work to fill the walls when the date of the opening rolled around. I also was intimidated at the prospect of meeting the public at an opening—of having to be “on show” along with my work. Was the little Mennonite girl inside me strong enough to withstand it all?

My first exhibits are history now, and I survived them. More importantly, I found that showing and selling are not selfish or self-promoting, but rather an opportunity to give to others. It was a thrill to have people enjoy my work, sometimes enough to buy it. I decided that when people bought my pieces, they were doing themselves a favor. The money paid for my time, materials, and experience. I came to believe that, while I may have created a work of art, in the end it didn't belong to me. It became part of the life experience of each viewer if it was seen in a show or on someone's wall at home. The idea of art being a form of communication or shared experience between the artist and the public took on real meaning for me. Art could indeed be a gift I offered to others. What a turnaround from the misconceptions I had carried for so long!

While I may have conquered my negative feelings, I still have a long way to go to paint the seemingly endless works which are struggling to be born in my head. The past year has been especially difficult in terms of painting. I had a year's lapse when I could not paint, following our family's move from inner-city Washington to suburban Maryland. I also have been working around the schedules and needs of our two small children. I find, too, that as I gain experience with watercolor it doesn't necessarily get easier; in fact, it becomes more complicated and I get more particular. My inner vision becomes clearer—I know exactly what

effect I want—but I have to figure out how to get the image on paper. The Hyattsville garbage collectors have been loading a lot of 100 percent rag paper into their trucks.

I must learn to accept my seeming failures as part of the creative process. I need to be able to tolerate the agony of the long gestation period when nothing comes together, yet work is being done and growth is happening. My challenge is now to paint and paint and paint again—to believe firmly that my vision is worthy of the wasted materials and persistent struggle. *I am* thankful for the drive I feel at present and for the inspiration that keeps me awake at night, painting and repainting pictures in my head. I only hope I can handle the stress of the creative process in the long run.

Through paint, in a style which fits me, I share my inner vision and life experiences. I started with landscapes, basically to learn to know and control the medium of watercolor. More recently, my passion has been flowers—their color, their almost abstract forms, their power, and their mystery. I have a long way to go to study and paint flowers, and, as I've already said, I've been experiencing great difficulties lately. I want to take some time out from showing my work, so that I can experiment, perhaps in oil or acrylics. I must learn to be patient and kind to myself, allowing myself enough time to learn what I need to know.

Not long ago, my four-and-a-half-year-old daughter awoke from her afternoon nap while I was painting. She came down the steps by herself and appeared in my workroom, wanting to help me paint. When I told her she couldn't do that, she decided to rearrange the art supplies in my closet, and when I said for her to stop that, she entertained herself by swiveling in my chair. All of this was very distracting and annoying to me. I happened to be at a point of no stopping—it was time either to make or break this painting. Finally, with a sense of resignation and some feeling of rejection, she stood in the doorway and said, “Mommy, I can't understand why *you* get to call yourself an artist and I can't call myself five.” She had been telling everyone that she was five, and I had told her that she shouldn't say she was five until she really was.

The wisdom and perception of a small child! Even though I call myself an artist now, every day I paint I have to believe it. I put myself to the test continually. Do I believe I can be an artist? Can I prove it? The complexities of becoming and being an artist persist, but I'm glad that I have the chance to try to be one—with the support of my family, my church, my friends, and my God.

*Eva Beidler is a watercolor artist from Hyattsville, MD.*

*This article first appeared in the Winter 1990 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# The Opinion

## of One of Us

*On May 4, 1979, a young German Mennonite terrorist, Elizabeth von Dyck, was shot by police in Nuremburg, West Germany.*

*We reprint here from Mennonitische Blätter in translation, the cry of two young Mennonites who knew the woman. Their questions of responsibility and sadness tumble over each other in the meditation they wrote upon her death.*

*With the smell and reality of violence increasingly heavy in the air, these tortured reflections are peculiarly timely and tenacious.*

One of us is dead—chased and shot to death as a terrorist. One of us—Elizabeth von Dyck, having grown up in a Mennonite congregation some of us knowing her from youth camps. Her death by force and its questionable circumstances pose questions from which we cannot escape.

How can it happen that young people from a church atmosphere, some of them even opposers of force, turn into terrorists and spread fear and anxiety among those to whom they wished to bring a new and better society, justice, and peace? And how can it happen that the only alternative to keep them from doing so, seems to be to chase them to death?

Where were we Christians when these people, with their conscience sharpened by the suffering in this world, quietly slipped into their brutally forceful and murdering activities? Together with Bishop Sharf we ask the question: "What have we failed to do for them, that they end up standing where they do, that they hardened themselves, not only towards the so-called ruling class, but towards society as a whole, in which they live . . . ?"

Was it right for us to refuse offering them our understanding for their compassionate suffering for others, for their righteous indignation? Could we afford to refuse to become involved in their vision of peace and justice, of more humaneness in this world? Does not, here in our refusal, lie our co-responsibility with these people who have strayed into error?

Wasn't there even real joy in not knowing them, not having anything to do with them for the sake of our reputation in society? Didn't we just get huffy much too easily about those who joined them? But weren't we culpable just and exactly by not knowing them and not having cared about them? It is our responsibility as Christians to call the terrorists home out of their "hate that destroys!" The Good Shepherd in the parable retrieves his lost sheep even then, when they have lost themselves in wandering off course so far that they cannot return by their own strength.

Death cannot be allowed to remain the only alternative for these people.

—Rainer Wiebe, Conny Wiebe-Franzen

*This article first appeared in the February, March, April, 1980 issue of Festival Quarterly.*

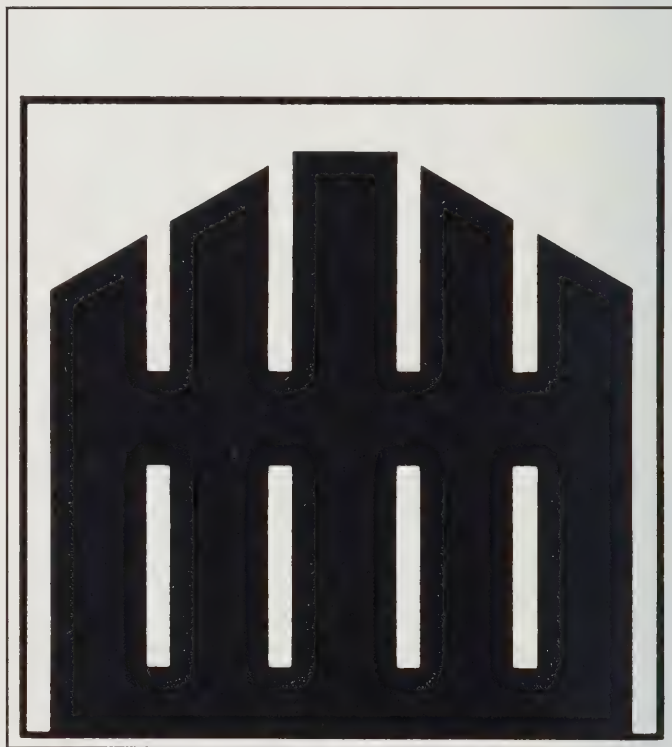


# *These Words Are For You, Grandmother*

by Jean Janzen

*T*he crude violin, the little organ  
he made of wood scraps and animal bones,  
and your guitar are all silent in the room,  
the strings untouched. His long hand  
slipped from yours after the last embrace,  
after his last gathering of the nine  
young faces around the terrible bed.  
And then the cold light in the room  
and the silence, and heaven so far away.  
The ministers brought shoes for the children,  
flour for your bin. But you were silent,  
your eyes empty, your mouth still.  
The photograph tells me that I  
have eyes and hands like yours  
and a mouth with a heavy lower lip.  
Look, I am shaping it for words,  
making sounds for you. I am speaking  
the syllables you couldn't say.  
See my breath is pushing away the cold.

*I* imagine you sitting on the doorstep,  
your dark braid undone and rippling  
down your back. You are plucking  
melodies from the guitar which  
he made for you, and he is there  
singing along, his arm soft around you  
in the Ukrainian dusk. And now it seems  
that we are both entering the darkening  
house to the pale bed, this bed  
of beginnings and endings, of arms  
encircling and then letting go,  
this bed which you have given me  
by your womb.



Artwork by Rodney Harder



**A**fter you hanged yourself  
 they buried you outside the gate  
 without songs, just a prayer  
 in the harsh light. My father,  
 ten years old, had found you  
 in the barn, your body  
 a still dark strip, your face  
 swollen and purple. And by that grave  
 he could not sing for you;  
 he did not speak of you.  
 He sealed his mouth with a heavy stone  
 and walked away.  
 And when he held me in his arms  
 he spoke of rivers  
 and a black crow against the sky.  
 Helen of darkness,  
 I sing you a song.  
 It is like water from a clear stream,  
 like a white linen dress.  
 I take you down, wash you  
 and comb your hair.  
 I lay you down beside the man you loved.

**T**he small, abandoned graveyard  
 lies in tall autumn grass, the markers  
 tumbled and covered. Last grasshoppers  
 have gone from the nearby stubbled fields  
 and a light frost whitens the feathery  
 heads of foxtail. I have come  
 with my passport, my photograph  
 and my name to stand on the unmarked dust  
 of your body, and there is not sound  
 but the dry leaves stirring in the alders,  
 the groaning of roots, and these words  
 breathing on a page.



*Jean Janzen is a poet from Fresno, CA.*

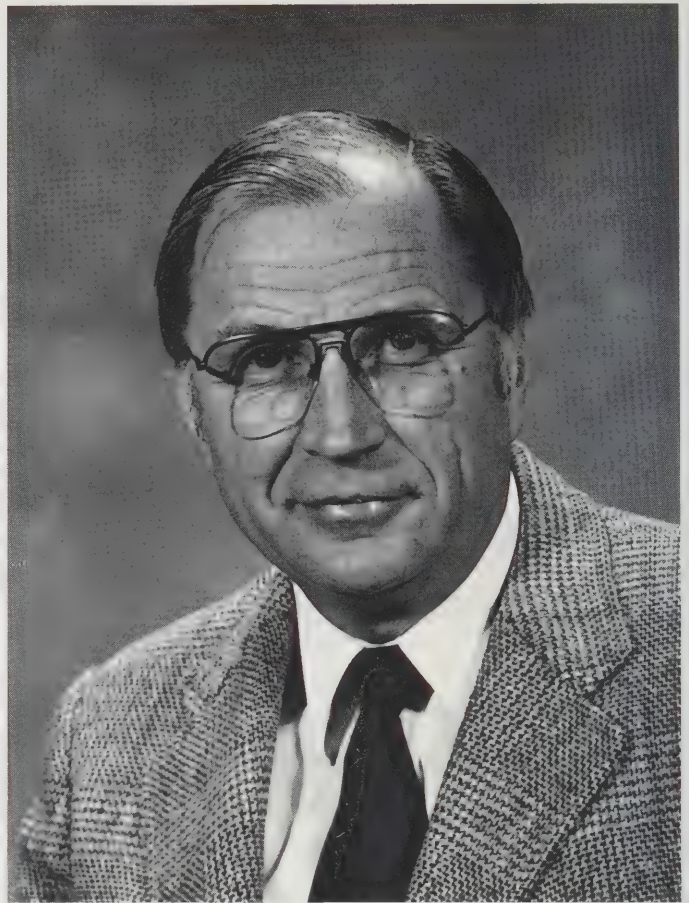
*These poems appeared in Words for the Silence (Center for Mennonite Brethren Studies, 1984) and in Three Mennonite Poets (Good Books, 1986.) They are reprinted from Festival Quarterly, Fall, 1985.*



# The Central Issue Is Faithfulness

by Theron F. Schlabach

*Editors' Note: Why aren't there more members of Anabaptist related groups? FQ received many responses to this question, first asked in the Summer 1989 editorial. In the following article, historian Theron Schlabach offers his view of the topic.*



"Why so few?" What lies in the question? Is not the primary question the more traditional Mennonite one: "Have we been faithful?"

Behind "Why so few?" may be some misuse of statistics. We often hear statements such as I heard recently, that we Mennonites in North America are 400,000, whereas we would be four million if we had just kept all our children since the 16th century, or maybe since we came to America. I am not a statistician, but the calculus does not sound right. If there are actually four million people in North America who have some Mennonite ancestors, then a lot of them have other ancestors as well. If we were to turn the genealogical pyramid upside-down and consider how many non-Mennonite ancestors those four million have had since the 16th century, the numbers would surely astound us. Moreover, Mennonites have not only lost;

we have also attracted a few. How did the Alderfers and Sawatskys come to be Mennonites? How is it that my spouse, who grew up in a thoroughly Mennonite family, had one grandparent who was an Irish immigrant and another who was Jewish, as well as two Amish Mennonite ones? If we were to use statistics on Lutherans and Catholics and United Brethren and Methodists and Jews the way we turn them against ourselves, we might be surprised how much progeny they lost to the Mennonites!

Does the question rest also on a sense of failure and therefore of guilt? It often seems to, and maybe it should. But there are positive points, too. I seem to remember that Jesus said something to the effect that the route of the faithful leads through the strait gate and up the narrow path. Another positive point is that at least we are not among those who gained big numbers by baptizing defeated peoples with

our swords at their backs. And while we have baptized some pretty small children, we have not baptized them willy-nilly, and certainly not unwitting babies, thereby gaining numbers through yet another kind of coercion. By and large, we have been true to our understanding that response and commitment to God's invitation must be voluntary. And voluntarism means freedom to say no as well as yes.

Do we have to feel complete failure about those who in the end have said no? Not necessarily, if we hear the Abrahamic call to be a blessing to the nations. Many of those saying no, perhaps most, have gone on to be constructive, upright, and moral citizens, and possibly more so because of the challenges that Mennonitism left in their souls. If some of our children have become a part of the civic community more than of the church, then surely we have often given something valuable to the



human community at large.

It is good to ask why more have not said yes, but who can be surprised? If we may think of the Anabaptists as living close to their Catholic upbringing, and therefore seeing holiness in terms of accepting a vocation apart from common-culture Christianity—that is, accepting a kind of monasticism, or holy order, with its discipline—then of course they chose deliberately not to go the way of the masses. Or if we consider the state-church and culture-Christianity of Catholic and Protestant Europe, then it is understandable that most people have looked upon Anabaptists and Mennonites as pariahs. For in rejecting state-church union and questioning the society's established religio-cultural synthesis, they have been dividers of human community, threats to solidarity, people who seem to undermine society's very foundations. Or if we turn our view to America—well, what German or Pennsylvania German group has ever become large? The Moravians or the Dunkards, even with their warmer Pietism? Or the more easy-going German Lutherans? No, and not the United Brethren, even with their imitation of the numerically successful Methodists.

So evidently some answers to "Why so few?" lie outside Anabaptism and Mennonitism.

And can we be surprised that droves of people have declined our theology? After all, it is a theology that quickly gloried in martyrdom, or at least in suffering, and then, if there was no suffering, it turned to humility. Of course there are always a few human beings who find strength and assurance in martyrdom or suffering or humility. Many more may want just enough suffering and humility to bolster their sense of righteousness. But probably only a few want to take martyrdom, suffering, or humility as literally and as objectively, and in such

large doses, as Anabaptists and Mennonites have from time to time. No doubt much the same can be said for discipline, or for trying to apply Christianity minutely to everyday affairs and everyday relationships. A lot of humans, if the choice is voluntary, prefer status and power and red-blooded vengeance to being humble and vulnerable.

Some of the reasons for "Why so few?" are surely less defensible. We have been right in choosing fewness rather than mass-culture Christianity, but surely, throughout history up to today, we could have done more to meet people where they are, in

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have been  
true  
to our understanding  
that response  
and commitment  
to God's invitation  
must be voluntary.  
And  
voluntarism  
means freedom  
to say no  
as well as yes.

whatever cultural phase they are passing through. In less than a century, the Methodists grew from a mustard seed into America's largest denomination, mainly by meeting genuine human need along America's expanding frontiers. The circuit rider, the instruction classes, and the better versions of the camp meeting were forms that responded to deep and legitimate human longings and fit the situation. From such a history,

Mennonites can learn.

We can learn also from our own history. As we tell ourselves *ad infinitum*, we have turned people away and driven out some of our own by boundaries we have marked and barriers we have raised—ethnic barriers not least of all. We have stressed discipline and order, good in themselves, in ways that seem stern, prickly, and cold. Actually, among ourselves we have enjoyed a great deal of warmth and support, but we have found those in family and close community; and, the world over, family and close-knit community may be the hardest circles to penetrate. Nowadays, however, our boundaries are probably not our besetting sin. Today the larger sin of Mennonites, at least of the vast majority who are not plain, no doubt lies on the other side. We try to be everything to everybody, until, instead of etching the gospel with unnecessary lines, we blur it into a shapeless blob. So we should not feel superior to those who set up the barriers of the past, nor should we repudiate our heritage. We should remember that some of the offense we have given lies in the gospel itself. But yes, we surely must take care not to create barriers not implicit in the gospel itself.

The central question is still how to be faithful. Relatively speaking, Mennonites have been strong on ethics, moral discipline, and determined obedience. We have not been nearly as good at invitation and warmth. If our gospel is to be whole, speaking to human, lostness of all kinds, then our idea of faithfulness must include a more penetrable, human, and godly warmth.

*Theron F. Schlabach is a professor of history at Goshen College, (IN), author of Peace, Faith, Nation, and series editor of the Mennonite Experience in America books.*

*This article first appeared in the Winter 1990 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# Primary Prevention

by Lawrence Hart

While Mennonites are reaching people around the world and, in so doing, changing the ethnicity of the church, we are hardly retaining those who grow up in our churches. I want to focus my thoughts on this phenomenon.

I am currently engaged in a program for the prevention of alcohol and drug abuse among Cheyenne children and youth. Two key words used by primary prevention practitioners are *inoculation* and *bonding*. These terms, borrowed from the field of health and sociology, give rise to the development of a multitude of strategies used in primary prevention. We must inoculate children and youth against the early use of gateway drugs, as an example, so they can resist the introduction of drugs that destroy their bodies and minds. We must teach them social skills and do whatever is possible to increase their individual worth. For our program, they must not only develop self-esteem, but tribal esteem as well. Strategies must also be developed to affect bonding. In primary prevention the strategy is to develop strong bonding to the nuclear family, to the church, school, and community. For our Indian children, development of a strong bond to the extended family is a must.

Indeed, many are leaving the Mennonite church. Obviously we in the Mennonite church are not doing a good task in the realm of inoculating and bonding for there are many who have left and are no longer relating to any institutional church. Are we ineffective in inoculating against spiritual indifference? It pains me to see the breaking of bonds to the family, church, and community by children who adopt totally different values and no longer relate to any church.

I would like to attempt an additional analogy on

the use of primary prevention techniques. One of the most effective methods to inoculate and build bonding with children and youth is through the use of a good curriculum on primary prevention. We realize that the material we develop must be tribally specific so that it is culturally relevant. We are doing this and we think we are effective. This brings me to the point of church educational curricula. The

Mennonite educational materials in our Sunday or church schools are second to none! The education committees, educators, curriculum writers, and publishers of our respective denominations do an outstanding task. Given this, the question of "Why so few?" becomes more difficult.

To really answer the question I must rely entirely upon my own observations and experiences. I have assumed many who leave no longer relate to the church. I have assumed that children and grandchildren adopt different values.

I also believe, based on my direct counseling experience, that some leave the Mennonite church for marital considerations. They worship in another denomination, but continue strong relationships to their original

family's church and community. This is a legitimate reason for leaving, and I strongly affirm it.

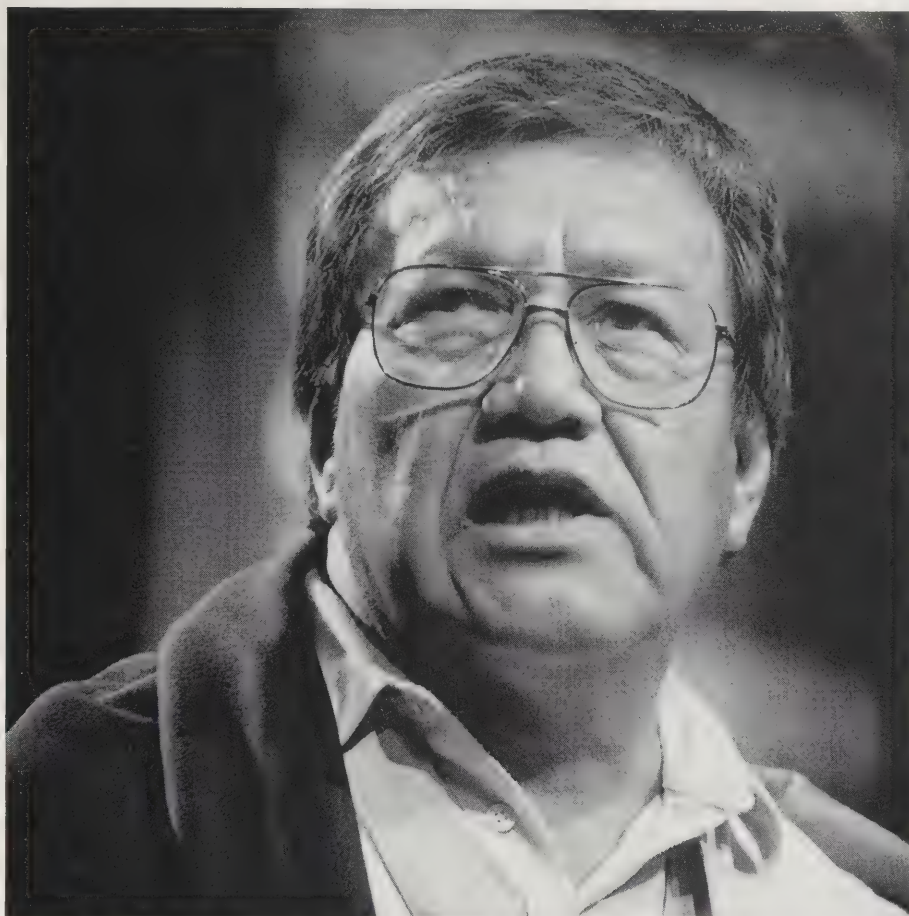
There are some who leave for theological or doctrinal reasons, and many of these still relate to a church. Some affiliate with a high church tradition; some establish themselves with the charismatic movement; others establish themselves with independent churches. Thus, many who have left affiliate themselves over the whole spectrum from high church to low church, liberal to conservative.

I do know of entire families in my community who left the Mennonite church to gain social distance. Furthermore, they made great efforts to obliterate their Germanic identity. Some of the Johnsons and

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*Lawrence Hart, Clinton, Oklahoma,  
is a member of the Executive  
Committee of MCC-US.  
A traditional Cheyenne Peace Chief,  
Hart is Director of Community  
Services at the Cheyenne Cultural  
Center, Inc. in Clinton.*



FQ/Kenneth Pellman

the Smiths were once the Jantzes and the Schmidts. In fairness to those now prominent families, they made their choice out of the suffering they endured during the two great world wars. But my plaudits go to those Germanic families from the very same community who endured personal, family, and church suffering and are still Mennonite.

While I am dishing out plaudits there is one group of those who have left that I wish to commend. It is those who make a lasting contribution to another ecclesiastical body.

On September 1, 1988, I participated in a special service at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. I read from the pulpit in my Cheyenne language an account from the Gospel of Luke. The occasion was the first Feast Day for St. David Pendleton Oakerhater. This individual of yesteryear became the very first American citizen to be elevated and canonized in the Episcopal Church, USA. The service was highly significant for this hemisphere's American Indians, Alaskan Natives, Eskimos and Aleuts, as well as Canadian Natives, because St. Oakerhater was an American Indian. I was there participating in this historic service because he was a Cheyenne!

I was awed from the moment the processional began. My mind raced back into Cheyenne history, circa Oakerhater's time, only three generations ago. On our reservation in 1880 the General Conference

Mennonite Church began its first mission work. My mind made some connections. One of the very first workers to come to our reservation to assist in the education work became the first president of the first Mennonite-supported institution of higher learning established in this country. He had a son born in the administration building of that institution, as I recalled. This son of a prominent Mennonite educator eventually left the Mennonite church. He became an Episcopalian. At the time of his death two decades ago he was Canon of the National Cathedral. Some, like Theodore O. Wedel, leave the Mennonite church to make their mark elsewhere.

Perhaps our task as a Mennonite church is to equip our people to leave and not worry about large numbers. To remain small and in the minority has an attraction about it. The events of the world today appear to point to a renewed appreciation for that which is small and diverse. The monolithic institutions with single persuasions are crashing. The Mennonite church is small, and, thanks to the work of the Holy Spirit, it encompasses many peoples of various racial, ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds. A better question may be, "Why become huge and monolithic?"

*This article first appeared in the Summer 1990 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# TIPS for Cross- Cultural Eating

by Luann Habegger  
Martin

artwork by Cheryl Benner



My husband once expressed his attitude toward food in the following way: "If there's someone in the world who can eat this and enjoy it, I can too." With this attitude he has been able to eat fish eyes in Tanzania, sheep's testicles in Morocco, and snake head's soup in Hong Kong.

If you plan to travel or live overseas, you may benefit from the following guidelines to cross-cultural eating:

1. Broaden your definition of food. As pointed out in a *Psychology Today* article (Mary Douglas, "Accounting for Taste," July '79), "Ideas of edibility are mainly

rooted in culture, not nature." When you leave your own culture, you'll quickly discover that what's regarded as a weed, a pet, or a pest at home may be a delicacy in other parts of the world.

When we arrived in Ghana, we planted vegetable seeds in neat rows in our garden. Most of the



seeds did not germinate. However, something which looked like red root, a weed my husband had to pull out of the cornfield on his family's Lancaster County farm, flourished. Since this was the only thing green and growing, we ate "Weed Au Gratin." A white sauce is often an effective cover-up for any untested food.

A "weed" is one thing, but what about eating cats and dogs, the favorite pets of millions of Americans? I met a man in Washington, D.C., who served Kentucky Fried Chicken and steak to his three German Shepherd dogs. That man put his pets on a pedestal and nearly worshiped them. It was only when I came to Ghana and became acquainted with two Mennonite missionaries that I found out that some Americans put their pets on a platter and say grace over them.

At the time the Mennonite missionaries ate their pet cat, named Peace, they did not realize that they were eating their own cat. They got another cat as a pet. Around Christmas time some friends told them if they didn't eat the cat, it would be stolen and found in someone else's cooking pot. Christmas Eve has now become the traditional time for these two missionaries to eat their cat. They are so accustomed to the idea that they named one of their cats "Groundnut Soup" because they knew that would be its final destination.

2. Find out about local food customs. If you are willing to try new foods, the next step is to learn how to eat them properly. In many parts of the world, people do not eat with the left hand. The left hand is reserved for functions that are regarded as unclean. I heard of an American who was eating with some Ghanaians. He took his ball of fufu (a national dish made of yam, plantain, and/or cassava) and joined the others in dipping his ball in the common soup bowl. An older woman was horrified when she saw the man put his left hand in the bowl. She left the group and

vomited. Another illustration of the left hand taboo was given by a Ghanaian woman who spent several years in the United States. It was with great difficulty that she ate the bread which she had earlier seen the hostess knead with both hands.

3. Learn to recognize and graciously accept a compliment. When people leave food on their plates, I assume that they don't like the food or haven't learned to take only what they can eat. This assumption may be wrong. A Vietnamese woman told me that she visited the home of an American university friend. The friend asked her if she didn't like

"If  
there's  
someone  
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American food because she always left food on her plate. The Vietnamese woman explained that it was her custom to leave food on her plate. She thought that it would be insulting to eat everything because it would appear as though she had come primarily to eat and not to fellowship.

One time I was slightly offended at a remark that was intended to be a compliment. "You've tried," the Ghanaian said to me. I interpreted that expression to mean "You've done the best you could but didn't quite succeed." Later I found out that Ghanaians mean, "You've done very well" when they say "You've tried."

I've noticed in others and in

myself a tendency to undercut a compliment. Someone may say, "I really liked that casserole." Instead of accepting the compliment, the cook may respond, "It wasn't as good as the last time I made it" or "It tastes better with oregano, but I'm out of it."

4. Take advantage of opportunities to attend special functions. Many foods are served only on certain occasions. You'll feel a sense of camaraderie when you, as a foreigner, are invited to share in local festivals and traditions. I was delighted when the owner of a pensione in Venice, Italy, served my husband and me panetone, an Italian holiday bread, on Christmas morning. At a harvest festival in Ghana I enjoyed eating the ritual meal of Kpokpoi, steamed unleavened corn dough.

5. Examine the whole food chain. Your appreciation for another culture's food will likely be heightened if you concentrate on more than your palate. The experience of eating fufu is different to the person who has seen men breaking up dry soil with picks under a broiling sun before planting the yams in mounds. Knowing that women may have walked miles carrying firewood so that they could cook the yams also changes the eating experience. Fufu, which may at first appear as a sticky blob, is more appealing if a person watches or assists as women pound the yam with a mortar and pestle for thirty minutes or more.

The five tips given above are no insurance against indigestion. But they almost certainly guarantee more memorable moments than a meal at MacDonalds. Bon Voyage and Bon Appetit!

*Luann Habegger Martin lives near Washington, D.C. after spending many years in other countries. She wrote her master's thesis in international development on "The Ecology and Economics of Cooking Fuels in Ghana."*

*This article first appeared in the August, September, October 1980 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# “Serve with the Weakness You Have Received from God . . .”

**T**o the Mennonites of the six continents on this earth: Africa, the Americas, Asia, Australia, and Europe.

You know that the earth you inhabit can be destroyed in a matter of seconds by a human hand. Engage all your energies, therefore, in prayer and in love. Let your love develop in every direction. Do not only direct your attention to your brothers and sisters in Christ both near and far, but develop fantasy and love for all the people who live in your immediate neighborhood.

Do not limit your hospitality to those who enter your house. You who live in freedom, go to those who do not live in freedom. Be their guest; they are awaiting you and will receive you gladly.

God has placed these gifts in your hands: money, time, health, and freedom. Employ these gifts with discretion and without reservation! Do not use your ineptitude, your weakness, or your limitations as an alibi for inaction; on the contrary, serve with the weakness you have received from God.

As you serve, remember: words without deeds are empty, and deeds without words are blind. Missions, relief agencies, and services for peace belong together. When you serve others, do not do it in a condescending manner, but in such a way that those served will experience their dignity anew and will recognize Christ in all his glory.

You should consider it entirely normal if others do not understand you, if they ridicule you because you have friends who do not have the respect of others.

If you want to serve others as even Christ served them, then share your life with them, identify with them!

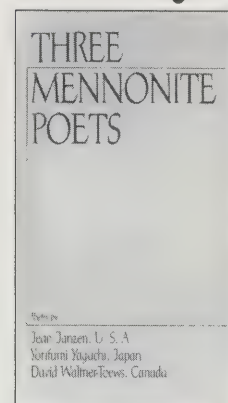
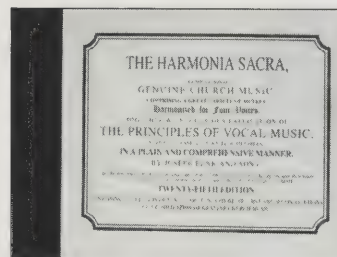
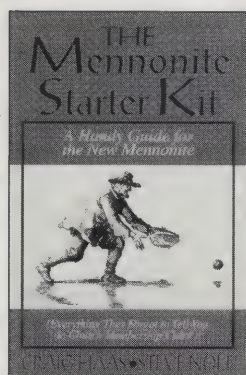
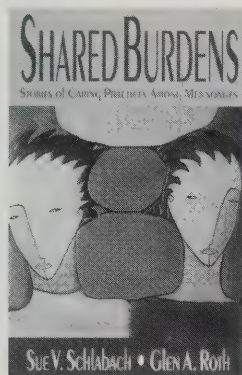
Jesus Christ will grant you dignity in the same way that you grant dignity to others. May this be your greatest joy henceforth and forever more!

*A paraphrase of 1 Peter 4:7-13, written and delivered by Georgine Boiten Du Rieu, Elke Hubert, and Willi Wiedemann at the Eleventh Assembly of Mennonite World Conference, Friday, July 27, 1984. Used by permission.*

*This article first appeared in the August, September, October 1980 issue of Festival Quarterly.*



# Mutual Aid • Humor • Music • Poetry



## Shared Burdens: Stories of Caring Practices Among Mennonites, by Sue V. Schlabach & Glen A. Roth

It is a practice that has distinguished Mennonites since their beginning—the unconditional offer of aid and assistance when trouble strikes a member. Commonly known as “mutual aid,” the practice has expressed itself in barnraisings, in the community’s providing ongoing care for a disabled individual, in their paying bills when a breadwinner has lost employment.

But now that only comparatively few Mennonites are self-employed, and now that many women work outside their homes, these people are less able to respond in traditional ways. On top of that, the community is faced with new varieties of “trouble”—those brought on by dysfunctional families, medical advances that extend life but don’t remove the need for care, urban crises of poverty and race.

A candid exploration of how a traditional practice has been adapted to the modern world through stories.

5½ x 8½ • 185 pages • \$6.95, paperback

## The Mennonite Starter Kit: A Handy Guide for the New Mennonite, by Craig Haas & Steve Nolt

What does it take to really become a Mennonite? **The Mennonite Starter Kit** takes a witty look at the assumed but unwritten requirements of acceptance into the Mennonite community. Tongue-in-cheek, the authors explore the maze of Mennonite jargon, acronyms, habits, and upside-down values confronting newcomers to Mennonite churches.

Whether you are considering “to join or not to join” the Mennonite community—or have been a Mennonite for years—you will enjoy this light-hearted, but insightful, look at contemporary Mennonite culture.

5½ x 8½ • 96 pages • 44 illustrations • \$5.95, paperback

## The Harmonia Sacra, Twenty-Fifth Edition, by Joseph Funk and Sons

First published in 1832 by Joseph Funk of the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, this popular shape-note hymnbook has enjoyed sales of nearly 100,000 copies. This new edition is built on the 12th edition (1866), the first 4-part edition. It includes materials added in later editions, as well as a section of three-part tunes from the early editions. Funk was known as “the father of music” in northern Virginia. His hymnbook was used in singing schools and for church use among Mennonites and many others. This beloved hymnbook is still used widely today by singings and song groups. This new edition brings to the public the best of this rich tradition in music.

9½ x 6¼ (horizontal) • 407 pages • \$19.95, hardcover

## Three Mennonite Poets, by Jean Janzen, Yorifumi Yaguchi & David Waltner-Toews

This well-received collection features three poets who differ widely in culture and style, yet are rooted in common values. Yorifumi Yaguchi is a well-known Japanese poet and professor. Jean Janzen is a Fresno, California, poet whose work has appeared in many literary magazines, and David Waltner-Toews is a Canadian with several books to his credit.

**What reviewers say—** “An unlikely gathering of excellent poems.” —**Hiram Poetry Review**

“Nature and current events are simultaneously addressed in these lines, most of which reckon in quietly sad ways with the virtues of quiet and peace, the simple life and humans who seek both. —**Christian Century**

5 x 9 • 120 pages • \$8.95, paperback • \$13.95, hardcover

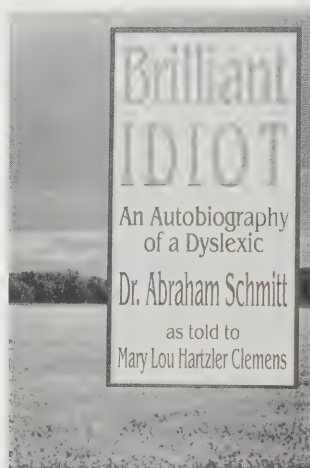
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*Mennonite Weekly Review*

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## ENERGY WATCH

### In Praise of Darkness by Kenton Brubaker

The past two days my housemates at the college guest house where I am staying have been the young Shimada sisters, Eriko and Mariko. Whenever they went out for the evening, they left almost every light in the house on—the bathroom, kitchen, living room (three lights), bedroom, and porch. So I would go about turning most of them off, except for their room which was locked. (I could see the light under the door!)

Why do I do this? I do it at my college as well. I turn off the main lights in the auditorium—some 50 spotlights of high wattage—whenever I notice that the room is empty. It seems the air-conditioning system sighs in relief.

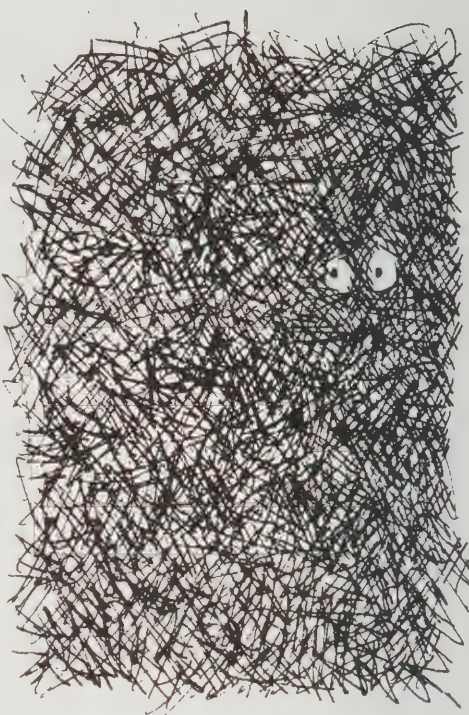
Why do I do it? Is it just a habit, thoroughly instilled in me by my mother? "Turn out the lights when you leave the room; save electricity."

Or is it also because I like darkness? Well, I do. My neighbor's anti-theft light shines in my bedroom so brightly that I can read a book. I need to pull the drapes to create darkness. All over civilization we must work hard to shut out obnoxious light at night. God created light; we have to create darkness.

What a pleasure it was last March to sit in total darkness in the little observatory in Gilgardia, Australia, and to view the Orion nebula through the telescope. I was especially thrilled to see the Megallanic Cloud and Southern Cross breaking through the blackness of the Outback. Astronomers come from all over the world to take advantage of the Australian night.

It's not that the Aussies don't also have the capacity to obliterate the nighttime skies. Their magnificent Snowy Mountain hydroelectric scheme furnishes plenty of power to light up the night. However, they restrain themselves and allow darkness to persist. I loved it.

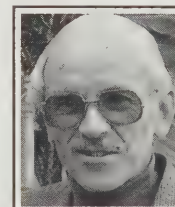
Then there are those other denizens of the night—the moon and the planets. I sat on a bench in the arboretum here in Hesston, Kansas, the other night to watch the stars, planets, and full moon come out. It



art by Cheryl Benner

was a spectacular night. Hovering over Wichita to the southeast were dark clouds brightly lit by bursts of lightning. The parched wheatfields of Sedgwick County were getting a bit of relief. In the west, Venus appeared first. Then I could see another planet, perhaps Saturn. But the full moon—that symbol of romance and nighttime glory—was hidden by the dark clouds of eastern thunderheads. I loved that darkness, hoping it would reach Hesston for it had not rained for four weeks. I finally gave up waiting for the moonrise; I saw it next morning before sunrise. It was glorious.

Without darkness, there is no dawn. Yes, Eriko and Mariko, I'll probably go on turning out the lights. Saving electricity is a habit I can't break. Furthermore, I love the dark.



Kenton K. Brubaker is professor of biology at Eastern Mennonite College, Harrisonburg, Virginia.



## A PEOPLE

IN MISSION: 1894-1994



The story of missions by Mennonites  
of Lancaster Conference and its partners

• Eastern Mennonite Missions recently published *A People in Mission: 1894-1994*, celebrating 100 years of organized mission work by Mennonites of the Lancaster, Atlantic Coast, Franklin, and New York State Conferences of the Mennonite Church. Compiled by a Centennial Committee, who enlisted **A. Grace Wenger** to write the history, the book is available at various celebrations commemorating the work of Eastern Mennonite Board of Missions and Charities during this 1994 centennial year.

• **Willard Swartley**, professor of New Testament at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, has written *Israel's Faith Traditions and the Synoptic Gospels: Story Shaping Story*. Published by Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, Massachusetts, the book advances the idea that the Old Testament story shapes the story of Jesus.

• *Heritage Celebrations: A Guide to Celebrating the History of Your Church* by **Wilma McKee** suggests ways for local congregations to celebrate important markers in their history. Ideas for setting goals and communicating plans, as well as the who, what, where, and why of planning such celebrations fill this volume. Contains several appendices, covering such subjects as "Anniversary Litany," "History Compilation Page," and "Indispensable Questions." Published by Faith and Life Press.

• An important document for Anabaptist scholars was recently released by Herald Press. *The Anabaptist Writings of David Joris*, edited by **Gary K. Waite**, contains the writings of one of the most misunderstood figures of 16th-century Anabaptism. Sometimes at odds with Menno Simons, Joris helped both militant and non-militant Anabaptists cope with the failure to establish the kingdom of God in The Netherlands and the north German city of Münster. Joris was also an artist, and several of his images are reproduced in this volume.

• Conrad Grebel College recently announced the first recipients of the Edna Staebler Research Fellowship—**Hildi Froese Tiessen** and **Paul Tiessen**. The Tiessens plan to do research and produce a manuscript featuring the transcription of a collection of letters written by Ephraim Weber (1870-1956) to Leslie Staebler. The letters are richly descriptive of the life of a son of Waterloo County, Ontario. The Tiessens hope their scholarly edition of Weber's "letters home" will reveal something about the Waterloo region of Weber's day.

• An historical novel revolving around the story of the Mennonites of Am Trakt, a settlement along the Volga River in central Asia, has been published by Dorrance & Co. in Canada. *The Quest for Shar-I-Sabs* by **Philip N. Bier** chronicles the story of the group who left Am Trakt, traveling 4000 miles across central Asia in an effort to escape the Antichrist. In this novel the name of the charismatic leader of the group is changed from Claas Epp to Klaus Pelz.

• **Ruth Aukerman**, a Church of the Brethren painter and printmaker, has written *Move Over, Picasso! A Young Painter's Primer*. Published by Pat Depke Books in association with the National Gallery of Art, the book offers step-by-step instructions for children who enjoy painting. Numerous color illustrations.

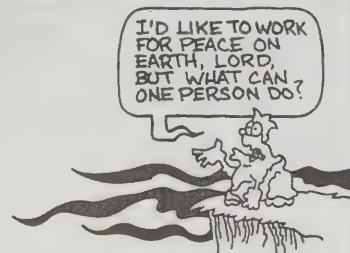
• From **Mary Christner Borntrager** comes the seventh book in the Ellie's People series. *Polly* is light Christian fiction about Amish life and

migration. Scheduled for release in August 1994, it is published by Herald Press.

• From **Carrie Bender** comes the third book in the Miriam's Journal series. *A Joyous Heart* revisits Miriam and Nate in this light Christian romance novel. Scheduled for release in July 1994, it is published by Herald Press.

## but why don't we go to war?

Finding Jesus' Path to Peace



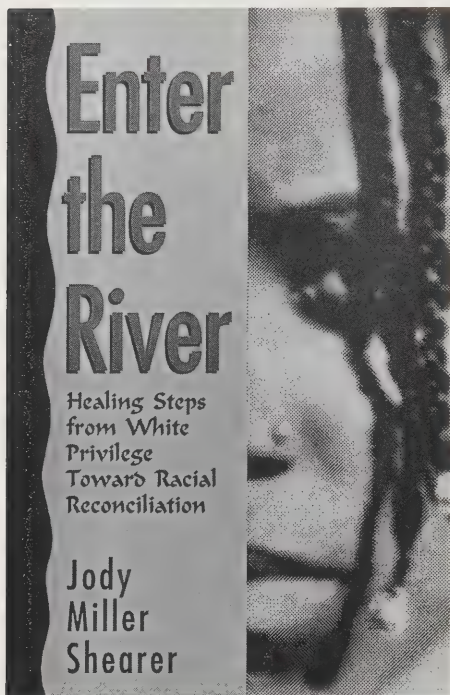
SUSAN MARK LANDIS

• *But Why Don't We Go to War?* is a handbook for parents and teachers of upper elementary children. Divided into six sessions, its themes include "Jesus Came to Bring Peace," "God's Children Love Enemies," and "Peace Is God's Vision." Each session features stories about peacemakers, biblical dramas, and helps for teachers and parents. Written by **Susan Mark Landis** with numerous cartoons by **Joel Kauffmann**. Published by Herald Press.



**Enter the River: Healing Steps from White Privilege Toward Racial Reconciliation**, Jody Miller Shearer. Herald Press, 1994. 214 pages, \$11.95.

Reviewed by James Isaacs



*Enter the River* is a fascinating account of what it means to be white with privilege and what it means to be people of color without the privileges which the majority possesses. All of the illustrations are superb. I feel the flavor of Jody Miller Shearer's experiences are excellent.

In a very personal way, I can feel the pain felt by Shearer, and I can relate to the pain of his friend, Don Guyton. The 214 pages of this book are full of great stories, suggesting ways to confront racism and white privilege.

The weaving of biblical history and imagery is intriguing as Shearer takes us beyond the typical view of racial injustices and into an arena of hope and forgiveness. I especially enjoyed the resource persons that Shearer used to gain insight into white privilege and the debilitating effects racism and white privilege have on society today.

I appreciate the way Shearer pointed out the many subtle ways that white privilege creeps into the lives of many people. Most of us would look for the most blatant things on which to focus our attention. Shearer has given his readers some excellent illustrations of

how the church may work at the ministry of reconciliation in this present day.

I particularly enjoyed the cross-cultural celebration, using the melting pot imagery of who we are and where we need to be. It is inspiring to see a writer with such keen insight into the various cultures in the church. I agree with the argument to let people of color be themselves in their leadership styles and in their styles of worship, thus allowing all members to find their own sense of place and peoplehood.

Jody Miller Shearer has offered the church a very definite course of action to deal with this major problem in the church today.

Easy to read and understand, this book is good for personal enjoyment and edification, as well as being an excellent ministerial tool. I recommend that all church conferences purchase this book for use in all of our Mennonite churches.

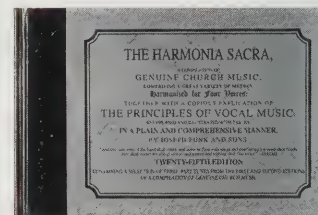
*Dr. James Isaacs is the pastor of Calvary Christian Fellowship Church and school administrator of Calvary Christian School, Inglewood, California.*

**FQ PRICE—\$9.56**  
(Regular price—11.95)

**Harmonia Sacra**, Twenty-Fifth Edition, Joseph Funk and Sons. Good Books, 1993. 407 pages, \$19.95.

Reviewed by J. Evan Kreider

This book is typical of so many choral anthologies published in oblong shape during the explosion of four-part singing by untrained music amateurs in the 1800s. Even German-speaking Mennonites eventually joined this English cultural movement when Joseph Funk published his *Genuine Church Music* in 1832. Later revised and rechristened *Harmonia Sacra*, it virtually dictated the direction Mennonite singing was to take for generations. Even his decision to print shaped notes does not seem strange to Mennonites my age since we figured all church music looked funny.



If the new Anabaptist *Hymnal* has sharpened your interest in sight-singing and meeting still more new hymns, buy four copies of this anthology of some 458 songs—for unless you have avoided bifocals, you will need one copy per person because the print is small and at times faint. The tenors get to sing all the melodies, many of the songs would be of interest to our amateur church choirs, and it is always comforting to know that at least Brother Funk considered this stuff to be genuine church music.

This enlarged reprint should be welcomed by all those who stubbornly maintain that four-part singing is possible without pianos and other such worldly devices. So, get out the pitch pipe and let's gather around the picnic table and sing one for the neighbor: page 165, "Sinner, Art Thou Still Secure!"

*J. Evan Kreider is Associate Director of the School of Music at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC.*

**FQ PRICE—\$15.96**  
(Regular price—19.95)



**American Mennonites and the Great War, 1914-1918**, Gerlof D. Homan. Studies in Anabaptist and Mennonite History Series, Herald Press, 1994. 248 pages, \$29.95.

Reviewed by J. Robert Charles

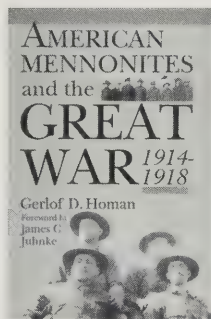
"War makes rattling good history," observed a 19th century novelist, "but Peace is poor reading." Any historian aspiring to recapture the Mennonite past and to capture and hold our interest will, if successful, revise Thomas Hardy. A Mennonite professor of history at Illinois State University does just that in this narrative. Both good reading and "rattling good history" await the reader of Gerlof Homan's gripping account of the collision of a peace-minded Mennonite people with a war-minded American nation during the years of U.S. involvement in the First World War.

American entry into the war and the institution of a military draft without clear provision for conscientious objectors in early 1917 caught Mennonites by surprise. Congregations, denominations, young men, and leaders across the country faced the hostility of local patriots, pressure to buy Liberty Bonds, and decisions on if and how much to cooperate with military authorities. Homan illustrates the varied Mennonite reactions—both courageous and confused—to these challenges through stories culled from Mennonite and public archives.

If the war left deep scars in Mennonite communities, it also helped bring them together in the outward-looking Mennonite Central Committee. "The suffering and sacrifices of the Mennonites in and outside the military camps in World War I were not in vain," Homan concludes. "They were the foundation of the Mennonite peace witness of the next generation."

J. Robert Charles, Goshen, Indiana, lectures part-time at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary and teaches part-time at Goshen College.

**FQ PRICE—\$23.96**  
(Regular price—29.95)



**Let the Good Times Roll: Prostitution and the U.S. Military in Asia**, Sandra Pollock Sturdevant and Brenda Stoltzfus. The New Press, 1992. 343 pages, \$24.95.

Reviewed by Sally Schreiner

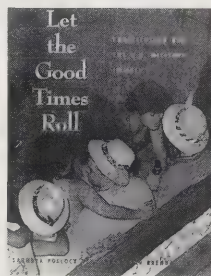
I did not find this book an easy read, despite its attractive, picture-book format. It arises from Stoltzfus's five years with Mennonite Central Committee in the Philippines, where she worked with hospitality women, and from Sturdevant's involvement in similar issues through the American Friends Service Committee.

Disarmingly prophetic in its impact, this collaborative effort provides a forum for voices which are usually kept silent. Extensive interviews, conducted primarily by Stoltzfus with nine women employed in the sex industry surrounding U.S. military bases, form the narrative core of the book. Their stories are moving without being saccharine. They challenge stereotypical notions of prostitutes as either wicked temptresses or helpless victims. Most of the subjects are dutiful daughters or mothers, working to help their families survive.

Sturdevant's photography presents visual images of the women, their economically stressed cultures, and the context of bar and street life from which they operate. Essays by four other writers add factual analysis and illuminate the symbiotic relationship of military culture, economics, and the sex industry. A concluding chapter identifies recurring themes and offers clear-eyed observations about the high price exacted from providing the requisite "recreation" which fuels the U.S. war machine. After gaining such knowledge, I was left wondering what my responsibility is in working for change.

Sally Schreiner is on the pastoral staff of Reba Place Church, Evanston, Illinois.

**FQ PRICE—\$19.96**  
(Regular price—24.95)



**If I Were Starting My Family Again**, John M. Drescher. Good Books, 1994. 57 pages, \$6.95.

Reviewed by Beryl Jantzi

*If I Were Starting My Family Again* was born out of experience and honest reflection. A strength, in my opinion, is its brevity. Time is a premium for parents of little ones, and this book could be read easily in an evening. Though short on words, it is long on insights and practical advice.

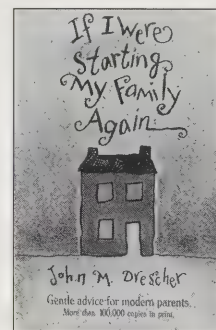
Through the use of personal anecdotes and well placed quotes, Drescher highlights core themes for the Christian parent. Several times throughout the ten chapters there are references to creating a happy home. Happiness is no trite accomplishment and neither is it accidental. According to Drescher, happiness in the family is a by-product of intentional Christian-based parenting.

Drescher does not give in to the temptation of talking only about the successes he and his wife Betty have known in raising their family. Included are the disappointments and honest confessions of what he would do differently. This fact gives the book credibility and integrity.

For those grandparents who would like to drop a few words of advice on occasion but find that such suggestions are not readily received, *If I Were Starting My Family Again* may be an appropriate gift. It may do as much and more than advice given by one who is too close to be heard.

Beryl Jantzi is Associate Pastor at Akron (PA) Mennonite Church.

**FQ PRICE—\$5.56**  
(Regular price—6.95)





**The Fortunate Years: An Amish Life**, Aaron S. Glick. Good Books, 1994. 251 pages, \$9.95.

Reviewed by Simon Schrock

As you read *The Fortunate Years*, you get a sampling of what life has been like for the past 90 years. Aaron Glick has written his memoir and has observed his 91st birthday. From his keen mind comes an account of living with godly faith in the Amish community. He tells the story with his own unique wit and weaves it around interesting periods of history.

Enriched with old photos, this book gives you the feel of life without Scotch tape and airplanes. It puts you in touch with life and work in the early 1900s. Glick writes about the "roaring '20s," where pleasure included a train ride and sorrow touched his life with the death of his mother. Her audible prayer has been cherished ever since.

It contains a taste of romance as he meets his "Anna," and a taste of real life as he buys "a brand new 1929 Model A Ford in spite of Anna's protests."

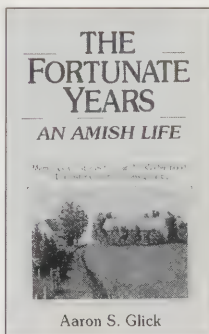
Glick's story continues through the various events of his life. As he lives on in the 1990s, he is "less fascinated by events" around him and says with the psalmist, "My lines have fallen in pleasant places."

In the first chapter, Glick mentions a part of his heritage referred to as the *Braucheri*. Contrary to what some readers may think, he did not intend to give his blessing on any form of witchcraft.

*The Fortunate Years* is like a diary of a man's walk with God through life. It contains deep sorrow but also strong notes of victory. Much can be gained by reading this volume.

Simon Schrock, Fairfax, Virginia, is director of Choice Books of Northern Virginia.

**FQ PRICE—\$7.96**  
(Regular price—9.95)



**standing all the night through**, Audrey Poetker-Thiessen. Turnstone Press, 1992. 94 pages, \$9.95.

Reviewed by Jeff Gundy

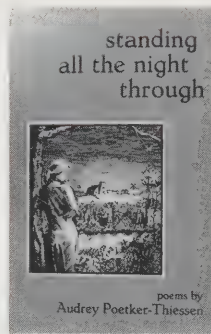
Audrey Poetker-Thiessen's second book of poems is consciously mythological, aiming to speak for a people, a tribe. Her people are Russian Mennonites whose wanderings have left them with a sense of permanent exile, even after a generation in Canada: "i said where i live / is not home / to a mennonite." The short, unpunctuated, uncapitalized lines of these inventive poems provide an energetic, subtle treatment of the inner effects of exile.

Other poems are more personal, even mystical. Many blur spiritual and sexual love together, probing the mysteries and connections of our most powerful human experiences: "& when i thought he loved me / i felt all my skin / was pulse & nerve / my skin ached for the promise." There is conflict over who will be "on top," and a frankness of language and emotion that may challenge some readers, but the angle of vision is original and rewarding.

This book is not, as the back cover claims, "the" Mennonite mythology, for there is no single Mennonite mythology. Yet as a treatment of the physical and metaphysical displacement of one Mennonite group and one particular Mennonite poet, it is alert, evocative, and well-crafted. Poetker-Thiessen's work shows the influence of other Winnipeg poets, such as Patrick Friesen and Di Brandt, but her searching lyrical poems stand quite well on their own.

Jeff Gundy is working on a prose book about Illinois Amish Mennonites, The George and Clara Papers. He teaches at Bluffton (OH) College and writes poems, essays, and reviews.

**FQ PRICE—\$7.96**  
(Regular price—9.95)



**The Individual and World Need**, Eberhard Arnold. Plough Publishing House, 1992. 72 pages, \$5.50.

Reviewed by Sharon Irvin

The challenge to living as community and with reciprocity to one another presented in *The Individual and World Need* by Eberhard Arnold is much needed to escape our present world of egocentrism.

Arnold expands on and illuminates the statement of the apostle Paul that no one lives or dies to himself. In doing so he vividly illustrates our common beginnings and how far we have strayed from the oneness we were meant to share, pointing out that no living creature wants to be alone.

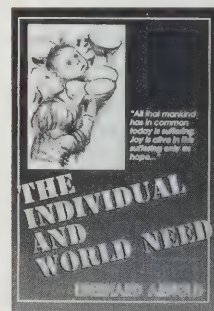
The conviction that "a healthy individual is one who sees with eyes of love and acts in love" and is "no longer preoccupied with himself" places the author in another realm. In this realm he plainly reveals the will of Jesus: "At all times and in all places life consists in serving one another and building creative, living relationships."

This book is not easy reading. It may take a second or even a third reading to grasp all that the author is trying to convey. However, I suggest that it will be thought-provoking for the person truly interested in putting the self aside and concentrating on others.

Although *The Individual and World Need* is not a voluminous work, it is expansive in thought. The effects it can produce on the person reading it are limitless.

Sharon Irvin, Los Angeles, California, is a member of Prince of Peace Anabaptist Fellowship where her husband pastors. She is an attorney and is working on a Master's Degree in Management Information Services.

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• As part of the 300-year commemoration of the beginnings of the Amish church (1693-1699), the Mennonite-Amish Museum Committee at Goshen (IN) College will present, **"Amish Design: Continuity and Change."** Curated by **Rebecca Haarer** and **Brian Byrn**, the exhibition features a collection of Amish folk art—quilts, blanket chests, chests of drawers, rugs, costumes, and various household decorative items. It opens September 9, 1994 at the Midwest Museum of American Art in Elkhart, Indiana, and continues through October 16.

• On June 23-25 180 people met at Bluffton (OH) College for the conference, **Mennonite Voices in Dialogue: Women Doing Theology.** Built around presentations and dia-

logue on theological issues of forgiveness, atonement, and a vision for Anabaptist feminism, the conference also included several performances by Mennonite-related artists. **Julia Kasdorf**, Brooklyn, New York, read from her book of poetry, *Sleeping Preacher*. **Cynthia Neufelt Smith**, co-pastor of Southern Hills Mennonite Church in Topeka, Kansas, presented **"Aspects of**

**Glory,"** a contemporary organ piece written by Elizabeth Larsen. And a women's coffee house on Thursday evening featured a reunion performance by **"Akasha,"** a Mennonite a cappella singing group which was active at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario, from 1988 to 1992.

• **Glenn Lehman**, Leola, Pennsylvania, founder of Harmonies Workshop, announces the release of **"Gesangbuch Treasures,"** a cassette recording of early Mennonite hymns from the 1804 *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*, which is still regularly used in Old Order Mennonite worship services. The selections from this treasure are sung in German by eight adults from an Old Order Mennonite

family. Lehman says, "One hundred fifty years ago many Mennonite worship services sounded much like this. People interested in the Mennonite story will want to hear this." For further information call 717-656-6226.

• The second annual **Shenandoah Valley Bach Festival** found singers, soloists, and instrumentalists gathering around Harrisonburg, Virginia to celebrate and perform the works of the German organist and composer, Johann Sebastian Bach. A weeklong festival—June 12-17—the event included performances by vocalist **Daniel Lichti**, Kitchener, Ontario; instrumentalist **Scott Hosfeld**, Harrisonburg, Virginia; and the **Shenandoah Valley Children's Choir**. The program also offered some unusual events designed to involve the entire family. There was a "Bach for children" presentation, a "Bach and Jock" soccer game, and a choir sing of Bach's "Cantata No. 21," which was open to anyone. **Kenneth Nafziger**, **Helen Nafziger**, **Scott Hosfeld**, and **Marcia Kaufmann** were primary planners and coordinators of the event.

• The Pennsylvania Federation of Museums and Historical organizations recently recognized the *Casselman Chronicle*, a publication of the Springs Historical Society, Springs, Pennsylvania, with an award of achievement. **Dr. Alta Schrock**, co-editor of the *Chronicle* and founder of the Springs Historical Society, was present to receive the award. The specific issue receiving the award was Volume XXXII, which discusses the history of religion, education, and family life in Somerset County, Pennsylvania.

• To celebrate the upcoming 75th anniversary of the Mennonite Central Committee, the **Kauffman Museum**, North Newton, Kansas, is developing a special exhibition to open in late winter of 1995. The exhibition will complement the "Bread Across the Waters" section of the museum's permanent exhibit which features an MCC feeding station sign, flour sacks, and a clothes baler. Persons who know of artifacts or photographs which would help set the stage for telling the MCC story are invited to contact Rachel Pannabecker at the museum.



Julia Kasdorf



Cynthia Neufelt Smith



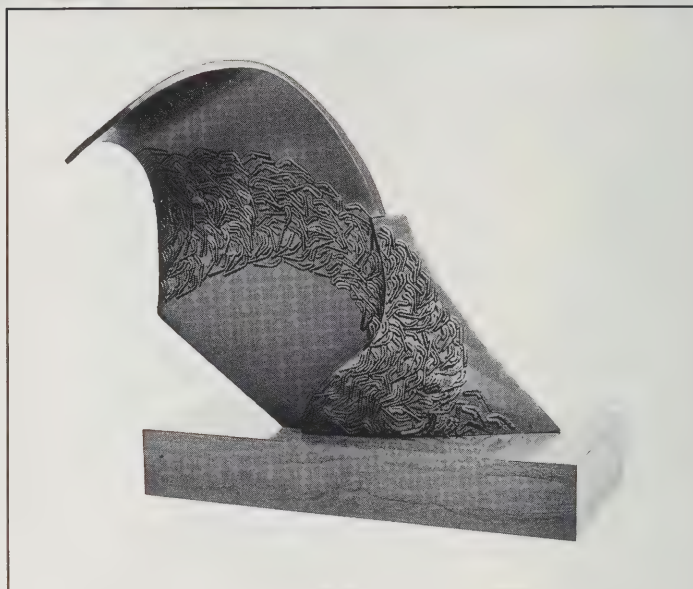
# Guns Into Plowshares

Mennonite artist, Esther Augsburger, and her son, Michael Augsburger, have taken on a monumental task. One evening in January 1994, they were watching a local Washington D.C. news report on guns and violence in the city. The police department planned to melt down some 2000 handguns, rifles, and automatic weapons, which it had either confiscated or received voluntarily.

Together Esther and her son decided, "Why not use them for a sculpture instead of melting them down?" The biblical edict to "beat swords into plowshares" was a natural, and they went to work. Esther arranged an appointment with the chief of police; they received approval from the mayor and took on the overwhelming chore of raising the \$75,000 required to complete the project. Both *The Washington Times* and *The Washington Post* reported the story. The sculpture, "Guns Into Plowshares," began to take shape.

Esther's voice became animated as she told *Festival Quarterly*, "Michael and I are doing this together. We've completed two models [see photo], and are starting on the actual piece next week [late July]."

The finished steel plowshare will stand 16 feet tall and 19 feet wide and will be accompanied by a nine-foot man preparing to till the soil. Before turning the guns over to the artist team, the police department agreed to render them inoperable. The Augsburgers plan to weld somewhere between two and three thousand guns into the steel plowshare. "In the finished piece, they will be seen as guns. A few will be melted



into the tip of the plowshare." The city has approved placing the sculpture outside the Superior Court Building.

"You will be able stand about halfway between the east and west wings of The National Gallery of Art, look across Constitution Avenue, and see the sculpture," Esther says. If all goes as planned "Guns Into Plowshares" will become part of the Washington D.C. landscape in late October or early November 1994.

—LS



## Foresingers Revive "Old" Mennonite Music

Several months ago, Glenn Lehman, Leola, Pennsylvania, talked to *Festival Quarterly* about a project close to his heart. After spending some time researching Mennonite musical styles, Lehman came to believe an entire genre of Mennonite music was lost with the updating of musical styles in the 1800s, a movement led by Joseph Funk of *Harmonia Sacra* fame. "I went on an excursion to find what was lost when Funk came along."

What Lehman found was a whole category of Mennonite singing not unlike the centuries-old, traditional Amish style. The Amish style featured German chorale tunes adapted to "slow

tunes," where as many as six or seven notes were devoted to each syllable in a hymn. Mennonites who came to North America in the 1700s "stuck closer to the German chorale tune recipe," and their music usually devoted no more than three notes to each syllable. In this style of music, the

song leader, who was called a "foresinger," usually sang the first word of each line by himself, with the congregation joining in for the remaining words.

Lehman pointed out that unlike the Amish, "Mennonites were always less isolated, so other musical styles were constantly affecting the way we sang. Artistically, we Mennonites paid a price for not being isolated. In the 1800s, we lost a musical style which had been part of our way of life for 350 years."

Lehman decided to write arrangements for a group of hymns in the *Unpartheyisches Gesangbuch*, a Mennonite

hymnal published in Lancaster County in 1804. The result was a musical, *Menno Heirs*, in which Lehman says, "I stepped back into relics of my past and wrote music that made sense to me." He then invited a group of singers to join him in presenting the piece which is, indeed, "a 20th century piece based on early musical styles." Lehman's interpretation includes both German and English songs, a bit of drama, and lots of foresinging. In fact, the group decided to call themselves "The Foresingers."

They have performed the piece at numerous places throughout eastern Pennsylvania.

Lehman concluded his thoughts by saying, "I created a musical piece, using the building blocks of my ancestors—both spiritual and genealogical. Even so, I'm always surprised when someone comes to us and says, 'I remember when Grandma used to sing that tune.' We awaken Mennonite memories."

—LS



## The People's Place Drama Team Premieres "Coming to America"

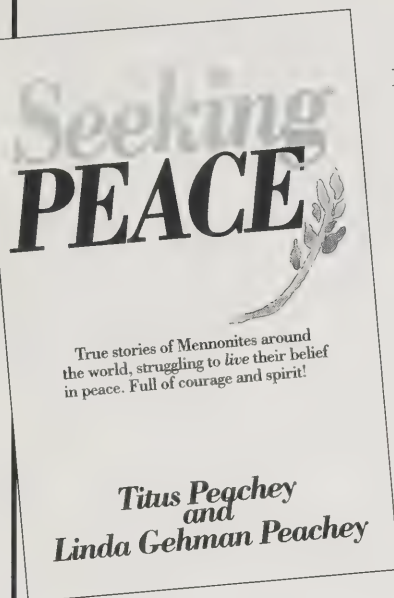
An educational center, which focuses on Amish and Mennonite life and history, The People's Place, Intercourse, Pennsylvania, introduced a series of short dramas this summer.

A team of performers (see cover photo) presented one of three short dramatic presentations (10-15 minutes in length) every hour on the hour between 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. The dramas, written and directed by Merle Good, were 1) "The Beginnings," set in the 1500s and profiling some of the conflicts of the early years of the Anabaptist movement; 2) "Coming to America," relating the pain of the voyage by ship, the early encounters with native Americans, and other basic struggles experienced by the settlers; and 3) "In the World but Not of It," portraying conflicts among modern-day Mennonites from the Old Order groups to the most progressive groups.

Cast members were Kim Stauffer, Mount Joy, Pennsylvania; Glenn Sauder, Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and Kara Hartzler, Hesston, Kansas. In addition to performing and singing, the cast interacted with visitors and found themselves answering numerous questions about Anabaptist understandings. All agreed they enjoyed sharing pieces of themselves with those seeking to understand faith, as expressed by Amish and Mennonite peoples. Hartzler commented, "I was brought closer to my Amish and Mennonite roots, but I also enjoyed the bridge to other people. People who were sincerely interested and curious about our faith."

The presentations ran from July 8 through August 20, Tuesday through Saturday. Merle Good, executive director of The People's Place, said, "We plan to offer the same program again next summer, possibly opening soon after Memorial Day." —LS

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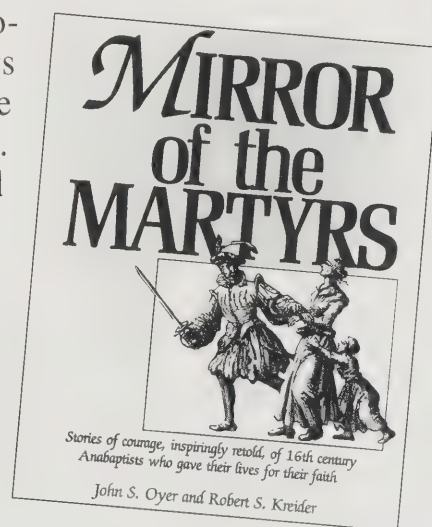
*Mirror of the Martyrs* reproduces 30 of the original etchings created by Jan Luyken for the *Martyrs Mirror* in the late 1600s. Authors Oyer and Kreider retell the stories in readable language, recreating the lives of early Anabaptists who died for their beliefs.

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# From Poison Gas to Playing Games

by Peter J. Dyck

World War II ended on May 8, 1945, the day when two more large concrete vats for storing poison gas had been completed at Espelkamp, Germany. The vats would not be needed. Germany lay in ruins. More than twelve million refugees desperately looked for shelter in partially destroyed houses, sheds, barns, bunkers, barracks, pig pens, and refugee camps. Among them were 35,000 Mennonites from Russia, as well as more than 10,000 Mennonites who had fled from Prussia and Danzig.

One day the British military discovered this munitions and gas factory hidden in a thick forest in northern Germany. It had escaped detection and bombing throughout the war because it was so well concealed by the forest. But now that Espelkamp was found, demolition of the more than 130 major buildings began immediately.

Enter pastor Birger Forell, a Swedish minister working with German POWs in England. When he heard about the gas factory of Espelkamp and that it was being demolished, he wasted no time getting there. Going straight to the top command, he said in effect, "Stop at once! There has been enough destruction! Look at all the refugees! Look at all the POWs returning to Germany. Where are they going to live? These buildings could be converted into living quarters for homeless people."

Enter the PAX men from America. Young Mennonite men, who had been drafted for Civilian Public Service in lieu of military service during the war, were being discharged. Many of them felt that they ought to do some kind of voluntary work beyond the call of conscription which they had just completed. So a voluntary service (VS) program was born, which later led to the birth of the PAX program.

In 1948 ten PAX men arrived in Espelkamp with a jeep, some tools, overalls, and willing spirits to help convert the poison gas factory into houses for refugees. Milton Harder, who today is pastor of the large Alexanderwohl church in Goessel,

Kansas, was the team leader. European young people were inspired by their example and came to help. By the end of the second year, 95 people had participated in this unique experience: 27 North Americans, 60 Germans, four Dutch, two French, and one each from England and Switzerland. Among them were a West Prussian refugee, Gertrude Neufeld, and a young Swiss man, Eric Habegger. They fell in love and married. Today they live in Akron, Pennsylvania.

One day  
the British military  
discovered  
this munitions  
and gas factory  
hidden  
in a thick forest  
in northern Germany.

The young people worked hard and long hours. During the day they remodeled existing buildings and built new houses, and in the evening they gathered to play peaceful games where a short time before poison gas had been made. They conducted Bible studies, led in prayer meetings, organized a choir, and taught English. Always they attempted to bring people who were strangers and sometimes enemies to each other, together as neighbors in a new community of trust and hope.

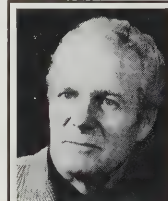
People of different nationalities and faiths were moving to Espelkamp when C.F. Klassen, the Mennonite Central Committee director of refugees, encouraged the West Prussian refugee pastor, Otto Wiebe, to settle in Espelkamp. Klassen was confident that this would encourage others to follow Wiebe's example, especially those who were still waiting to immigrate to Canada, but who

in reality had very little chance of getting there.

For two days—August 12 and 13, 1951—a small group of Mennonite refugees met at Espelkamp with Klassen and Wiebe. There was no thought of going back to their former homes in Russia and Prussia. Those bridges had been burned when they fled to West Germany. But to also give up their dream of a new beginning in Canada was difficult. They looked around, they asked many questions, they watched the PAX men work, they discussed, and they prayed. One of their major concerns was employment. Where would they find work? At the end of the second day, united in prayer and trusting God to provide, and also looking to Wiebe to give leadership and stability to the new venture, they made the historic decision to move to Espelkamp.

When the PAX men had concluded their work, they built other settlements for refugees in Germany, like Backnang, Wedel, Neuwied, and Leutesdorf. Some went to Greece to work in Macedonia and on the island of Crete. But never again did they have the challenge, the frustration, or the joy of helping to convert a vast gas manufacturing plant into a peaceful community for homeless refugees. Literally a venture of changing death into life.

Today there are more than 2000 Mennonites in Espelkamp, worshipping in four churches and maintaining several mission outposts in nearby areas. Looking back over the 40 years of history at Espelkamp, Pastor Albert Bartel, one of the original refugees and founder of Espelkamp's first Mennonite congregation, said: "We must confess with the disciples when Jesus asked them: 'When I sent you out without a purse, bag, or sandals, did you lack anything?' They said, 'No, not a thing!'" (Luke 22:35)



*Peter J. Dyck has spent a rich life shuttling refugees to new homelands, overseeing relief programs, and telling wise and witty stories. He and his wife, Elfrieda, live in Akron, PA.*



# Music—A Matter of Whose Voice?

by Carol Ann Weaver

We were chatting in a small bar in Alaska when we heard about people whose tent was taken down by a black bear in front of their eyes. Our story had become legend, riding up and down the Alaska Highway via truckers and backpackers. As we heard it come back to us, we felt it belonged to the whole region, not just us.

In this politically correct era, we become aware of a guardian conscience trying to tell us which voice we may use, which story we may tell. A recent review of a native Canadian blues band complained that the band sounded like any other blues band, not "native" enough. All of a sudden my heart went out to this native band. Are they not as worthy of invoking the standard 12-bar blues as non-natives? Certain unwritten rules allow whites to play jazz and blues and African Americans to play classical and folk, but what about other "ethnic sorts"? If you're Mennonite, for instance, should you write in four-part harmony; if Jewish, score for a Klezmer band?<sup>1</sup>

Many voices may come to us on our journey toward finding our own authentic voice. My three-year-old possesses a half-dozen voices of personas she enacts routinely, as a necessary part of her learning the versatility, flexibility, and range of her own voice. However, we often tend to prescribe what others' voices should be, wishing to limit their range of legitimate expressions.

What can be more tricky than translating a different culture into our own sounds, our own music? My recent year in Kenya brought me into a musical world quite different from my Western, classical background. One temptation which struck me as too cheap and easy, too naive and insincere, was to copy an African sound, using African instruments and rhythms I learned from Alfayo Omwandu, my drum teacher. Yet any African influences which enter into my music may be considered by some to be an appropriation of African voice. "Catch the spirit, not the literal sound," Doreen Klassen, experienced Canadian ethnomusicologist and folklorist, advised me.

This I attempted to do in Kenya while composing an extended work, *Daughter of Olapa*, based on Kenyan traditional oral literature. I first envisioned collaborating with a Kenyan poet which proved impractical. Instead, I devised my own lyrics based on Kenyan legends, receiving permission from the original collectors to use the stories in my own words. The music is influenced by African pulse, layers of rhythms, shifting beats, and harmonies but seems to come out of my own idiom.

Does this piece appropriate Kenyan voice? Is it less "honest" than my subsequent one, *Appalachian Call*, which quotes Mennonite hymns and four-part harmony? A reviewer may wish me to stay "Mennonite" at all costs. However, like three-year-old Myra, I need to voice my many inner pulses, need to say thank you to more than my Mennonite roots for the life I receive. I feel it is important to pass on stories which move, change, and affect me, whether originating from me or not. The story of Wanjiru, who is sacrificed and resurrected, bringing life and prosperity to her people, is a sort of Christ story which transcends Kikuyu culture. And Wanjiku Kabira, the Kenyan col-

lector, seemed proud I too would pass on the story because she does not own it; it comes from her people but belongs to us all.

So who owns stories anyhow? And does each of us have just one voice? We are happy our black bear story is common property, and I would be glad if someone wrote a song about it. As we listen for our own voices, are we not surprised to hear them coming from many places, some of which we have not yet been to, and in tones we have not yet heard? Elizabeth O'Connor in *Our Many Selves* has helped us understand multiplicity within ourselves; it may be timely to listen to our many voices as well, and give them song.

<sup>1</sup> Klezmer bands generally consist of instruments common to East European Jewish people, often featuring clarinet, strings, possibly accordion, and playing East European and Yiddish melodies.



Carol Ann Weaver is a pianist, composer, and teacher of music at Conrad Grebel College, Waterloo, Ontario.

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# The Crack of Dawn and the Fall of Night

## by Keith Helmuth

Some folks are just born farmers. They rise with the roosters, get the chores done before breakfast, and face the day with a bright outlook and light step.

In the early days of our farming enterprise, I had a work routine that got me up and going before sunrise more often than not. For a long while I did a pretty good imitation of a morning person. I often truly enjoyed the early rising, watching the stars fade, and greeting the light of a new day. Frequently, I was on the road to market with cider, bedding plants, or early greens before the rolling horizon brought the sun back into view. And on those dew-free mornings in mid-summer when I could cut acres of hay before hoving to for a second breakfast, the satisfaction of acting productively in concert with the weather made me feel like a creature of natural intelligence.

Many were the times, however, when thinking ahead to the satisfaction of getting an early start on the day's cider production got only one leg out of bed. The other one resisted, insisting the nighttime renewal of its metabolic efficiency was not yet complete. On these occasions it was up to the head to cast the deciding vote. My head just naturally sided with the leg still under the covers, and more often than not went back to the pillow to more thoroughly consider the situation. When the foot on the floor was sufficiently chilled, the head pulled up, called on a stiff dose of good Germanic willpower, and convinced the whole apparatus to, at last, hit the deck.

As you can see, despite the demands of my vocation, I am not really a morning person, which, in itself, is not an insurmountable disability. But—and here it gets tricky—if one is not a morning person, one is very likely a night person. Some folks may be exempt from this dualistic bent of the universe and may be blessed with a sweet moderation in their relations with night and day, but, alas, I am not among them. My natural inclination is to become increasingly geared up as the witching hour approaches. Some of my sweetest moments have been in the

hours past midnight, feet up by the stove, a new book of poems in my lap, the household in deep sleep, and a nor'easter whipping snow around the corners of the house.

My penchant for soaring on the wings of night has not been entirely against the grain of the farm. For example, it has stood me in good stead during lambing time. The universe, it seems, has set the birthing clock of most sheep for the hours just before dawn—a timing which no doubt has served the species well in mild climates where spring comes early and a balmy morning sun helps dry and invigorate the newborn members of the flock.

But in northern climes, farms which have undertaken the care of sheep need a night person to keep the birth watch; a person who can usually tell by one or two in the morning if there is likely to be a birth before four or five. Many have been the times when the book of poems by the stove has been replaced by a stack of towels and the rubbing down of newborn lambs. Later in the morning, with the lambs nestled against the shaggy gray wool of their mothers, heads drooping, eyes closed, and the last placental moisture steaming off their bodies into the sunlit air of the open barn, my nocturnal disposition has been at peace with the farm.

The trouble with being a night person who has taken up morning work is that one tries to have it both ways. The result is that proverbial dilemma—burning the candle at both ends and having diminished powers for sustained endeavour at any time of day. The condition of overwork, even when self-imposed by economic necessity, is at odds with the metabolic wisdom which has formed and sustains us. That metabolic wisdom is coordinated in a deep and comprehensive way with the environment of day and night, activity and rest.

If you stop and think about it, pause and ponder on the larger scope of things, the alternating pulse of day and night is the great regulator and sustainer of life. It has been demonstrated, for example, that light is a nutrient, having specific catalytic effects within biological process, without which our

emotional balance goes awry. It has also been discovered that dawn light is of significantly higher quality, with regard to biological effect, than light from other times of day. Thus, it appears that standing in prayer before the rising sun—the ancient practice of many religious traditions—is grounded in an intuitive understanding of this source of emotional balance and spiritual well-being. Obviously, morning people have a leg up—both chronologically and biologically—on night people.

I sometimes wonder what night people did before the technologies of gas and electric illumination gave us the opportunity to indulge our deviant bent. My guess is, there may not have been as many of us. Night people may be mostly an evolutionary quirk of technology, people whose internal clocks have become dis-synchronized with the natural order of day and night.

Now that my farming duties have grown lighter and more of my time is given to writing, community development, and committee-type work, the tendency to labor on into the night has, unfortunately, been reinforced. But I have reached an impasse. While my inclination to work at night remains strong, I now spend more time waking myself up than I do working. Desperate measures are called for; I have resolved to become more of a morning person. So far, the rewards of morning accomplishment outweigh the loss of communion with the night.

A problem, however, still remains. With the coming of spring and summer, morning comes on earlier and earlier and night comes on later and later; and on the farm that means the candle again burns from both ends. My next resolve will have to be a sneak attack on the old work ethic itself.

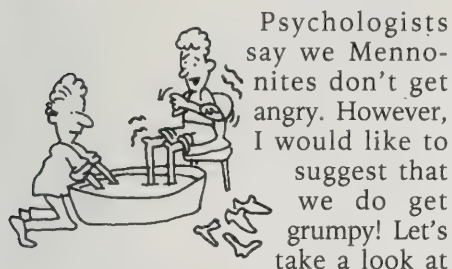


*Keith and Ellen Helmuth have developed a small-scale diversified farm in New Brunswick, Canada. Keith writes out of "a background of ecological and social concern."*



# What Makes Mennonites Grumpy?

by Emerson L. Leshner



Psychologists say we Mennonites don't get angry. However, I would like to suggest that we do get grumpy! Let's take a look at some of the things that "concern" us as a people. Of course, these things do not anger or enrage us; they simply make us grumpy! Mennonites don't get steamed; they only get blanched. Mennonites don't boil; they briefly simmer. We don't get fired up; we simply get a little excited. So, what does make Mennonites grumpy?

- Answering machines with cute messages
- Weak coffee at "fellowship time"
- A preacher with no stories
- A committee with no process
- A small group with no sharing
- A Sunday school class with no check-in time
- Missing TV ("60 Minutes") on Sunday night
- Films about the Amish
- Shoo-fly pie that is too wet on the bottom
- Shoo-fly pie that is too dry on the bottom
- Curried pot-pie
- All-day church meetings on Super Bowl Sunday
- Too many people sitting in the same pew
- Singing all six verses of a hymn
- Children who aren't overachievers
- Winning the lottery
- Washing feet in cold water
- Saying "no" without an excuse
- Too many people commenting on your new car
- People who always raise their hands first
- Going to family reunions
- Missing family reunions
- Dogmatic persons in your Sunday school class
- Having someone mistake you for a Mormon



artwork by Cheryl Benner

- Having to explain the difference between Mennonites and Amish
- Other Mennonites identifying you as a Mennonite in public
- Pastors who know everything
- Pastors who don't know anything
- Cooperating with Integration
- Integrating with Cooperation
- Missing "The Readers Say" in *Gospel Herald*
- Stale pastry in Sunday school class
- Enriched white bread for communion
- Mennonites who don't sing well
- Other Mennonites who wear lots of gold chains
- Fund-raisers who mention your first name once too often
- Church telethons that call at mealtime
- Mennonites who don't believe in dessert
- People who always read their Sunday school lesson
- People who serve only 7-grain bread



Emerson L. Leshner is a senior psychologist and director of older adult services at Philhaven, Mt. Gretna, PA. He is a member of the Association of Fellowships of United Grumpy Mennonites, not to be confused with the United Association of Grumpy Mennonite Fellowships.

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## AMERICANS ABROAD

# A Creepy Thanksgiving at St. George's by James and Jeanette Krabill

It was the only time that suited the family schedule. Thanksgiving weekend. So off we went on a three-day trek to St. George's Castle in Elmina, Ghana.

St. George's Castle. Reportedly among the most important and oldest intact European fortifications to be found anywhere in the Tropics. Today it is considered a Ghanaian national treasure and has recently been selected as one of UNESCO's World Heritage Monuments—a status granted to only 315 monuments in the world: the Pyramids, the Statue of Liberty, and others of like ranking.

First built by the Portuguese in 1482, later modified and occupied by the Dutch and British, St. George's has served many different functions over the years—as a port hostel, trading center, and military outpost. It is particularly well known, however, for the strategic role it played during the slave trading period when captives were held within its walls for up to several months awaiting transport to Europe and the Americas.

What had, then, in the early years been little more than a European military garrison became for over three centuries a human stockyard of the most demeaning sort. "No words could ever begin to describe," states the castle's tour booklet, "the horror and suffering these dungeons silently witnessed. Shackled, beaten and starved, millions of unfortunate souls survived the forced exodus from their homelands, only to be sold, branded and thrown into these despicable holes. Finally, both men and women were stripped naked and herded onto waiting ships. In most cases, these vessels were nothing more than floating coffins, where human cargo was literally stacked like books on shelves . . . In stopping to reflect on the endless litany of man's inhumanity to man, one shudders to realize that the barbarism of the Atlantic slave trade has no parallel in all recorded history!"

Walking through the halls of St. George's Castle is clearly no picnic. We are miles from Disneyland or Yellowstone National Park. Especially when one is invited to visit the chapel

at the heart of the castle complex where European slave traders met regularly to worship their God.

The early Portuguese Roman Catholic chapel, we were told, was eventually transformed by Dutch Protestants into a slave market, and the former confessional converted into a lookout station from which traders could keep close watch over auction proceedings. The Dutch Reformed occupants, then, built for themselves a cozy Protestant chapel two stories above the clamor of the damp dungeons where slaves were held. Over the main entrance to the chapel were inscribed the following words of consolation from Psalm 132: "Zion is the Lord's rest, it is His dwelling-place to eternity."

Now, the Krabill family has for many years supported the concept of "vacationing with a purpose." But this vacation offered us almost more "purpose" than we had bargained for. We will not soon forget Thanksgiving '93. At the end of the day's tour, one of our children wrote in the castle visitors' book, "This place is creepy, but interesting. I learned a lot today about how badly Africans have been treated."

The question is probably worth asking: Are we more preoccupied with entertaining our children, than truly educating them? Are we protecting and insulating them from things they deserve and need to know? Is it true, as some fear, that we are raising a generation of "marshmallows," unable to resist the heat and harsh realities of the world in which we live?

If we are, and if it is, then perhaps it is still not too late to take an honest look at our frightful past, commit ourselves to a more hopeful future, and, in the end, give thanks to St. George's for the lessons we have learned—on an otherwise creepy Thanksgiving Day.



*James and Jeanette Krabill  
live with their three  
children, Matthew,  
Elisabeth, and Marie-  
Laure in Abidjan, Ivory  
Coast.*



**Belle Epoque**—A charming but unlikely tale set in 1931 Spain. A handsome army deserter and former theological student finds refuge in the home of an eccentric artist and his four daughters. In Spanish. (7)

**Beverly Hills Cop 3**—The original was witty; this rip-off is a silly cartoon. (1)

**Blown Away**—A gruff, high-paced thriller laced with Irish sentiments. A bomber with an attitude is loose in Boston. Very involving, but leaves viewer saying, "So what?" (6)

**The Client**—An 11-year-old boy who knows more than he should, his feisty female attorney, and a charming/crusty U.S. attorney spar in this delightful story. Well acted. (7)

**Dream Lover**—A below-average yarn about a man who pursues the girl of his dreams and pays a heavy price. (2)

**The Favor**—An unhappy single woman conspires with her best friend. Touching moments, but highly unbelievable. (4)

**Forrest Gump**—Hard to say. Is this a delightful, profound story about an innocent man who is unimpressed by the moments in recent decades which capture the media and the masses? Or is it a wandering offbeat yarn about a silly fantasy? In any case, it gets you involved. (6)

**I Love Trouble**—Elements of this film really work. But the glue that holds the moments together is all Hollywood deadly formula. Too bad. Two reporters compete to cover the same investigation. (5)

**It Could Happen to You**—A farfetched tale bordering on a morality play (boring!)—but charmingly done. An honest cop who promised to split his lottery ticket as a tip to a waitress faces all sort of trouble when he wins. (7)

**Maverick**—Casual Western with lots of atmosphere. Pace keeps dropping as the film drags on. Has some great moments. (4)

**Renaissance Man**—A washed-up ad executive finds temporary employment teaching "comprehension" to Army recruits for whom the military has little hope. (4)

**The Shadow**—One of the worst films in years. Crime fighter pursues villain with girl at his side. (1)

**The Slingshot**—A likeable study of a 12-year-old boy growing up in Stockholm in the 1920s, inspired by and confused by his Swedish socialist father and his Russian Jewish mother. In Swedish. (6)

**Speed**—For pure on-the-edge-of-your-seat thriller, this picture delivers. A city bus will explode if it falls below 50 mph. Quite a challenge for the hero-cop and the woman

behind the wheel. Not profound, but who cares. (7)

**Thirty Two Short Films about Glenn Gould**—Definitely for the film buffs only. An interesting series of short scenes about eccentric pianist Glenn Gould. (4)

**True Lies**—Better than some Schwarzenegger flicks, but not James Bond. Spies, terrorists, and marriage boredom. (3)

**When a Man Loves a Woman**—Sincere, frank look at a young wife who succumbs to alcohol and her husband who's unable to help her. Strong dramatic beginning bogs down into counseling mode. Worthwhile and warmhearted. (6)

**Widow's Peak**—Eccentric women in a gossip British town. Plot seems hackneyed but acting has strong moments. (6)

**With Honors**—Predictable tale about a homeless man at Harvard who shows up the smart but dumb students. So-so. (5)

**Wolf**—Watch out. Highly stylized but effective film about a sophisticated editorial director who is accidentally bitten by a wolf. Jack Nicholson is superb. (7)

*Films are rated from an adult FQ perspective on a scale from 1 through 9, based on their sensitivity, integrity, and technique.*

## Warm and Practical

### *If I Were Starting My Family Again*, by John M. Drescher

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quets one more time. Then she gave us all a small laugh and did the Power Mom walk unescorted to her seat in the first pew.

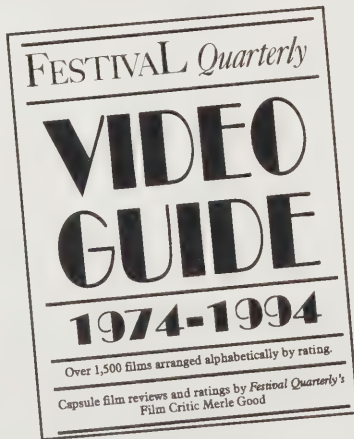
In an instant, I knew what had happened. Walking down the aisle at your child's wedding is an out-of-body experience. You're proud to be there, but you long to stand back and watch, to absorb the moment, to catch your daughter's eye and hold the look. But of course her eyes were locked onto another man, Allen, standing at the altar. For this moment, at least, you may perform your role with dignity and even nobility, but essentially you are a delivery system.

The meaningful role of the father of the bride was played out long before the church music began. It stretched across those years of infancy and puberty, adolescence and young adulthood. That's when she needs you at her side.

At the end of our short passage through the congregation of friends and family, we shared a quick embrace and Jennifer linked arms with Allen. As I stepped back I did not have a sense I was giving away a daughter. In that moment we were widening, not severing, family ties.

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## RECLASSIFIED

# Humor Among Mennonites by Katie Funk Wiebe

Though the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Volume V, 1990) includes an article on "Humor," this weighty tome isn't usually considered as a source of humor. Yet here's what I found:

Orie O. Miller, well-known Mennonite churchman, claimed he could travel around the world (which he did about 17 times), and order his meals anywhere with the three words: omelette, cocoa (or chocolate), and french fries.

When he ordered french fries in Paris, the waiter snapped back, "We don't fry the French," and refused to place his order. Orie's philosophic response was characteristic, "That's how you get when you lose an empire." France had just "lost" Morocco and Algeria.

—"Orie O. Miller"

Verena S. Lehman and her husband, Peter S. Lehman, were early pioneers in Adams County, Indiana. She was known as a woman of courage, resourcefulness, and conviction. At a time when almost every Mennonite family had a wine barrel, she pounded a nail in the keg of wine in their home. Not until the wine had seeped out did she tell her husband that the keg leaked.

—"Frontier"

D.A. Yoder, longtime bishop of Elkhart County, Indiana, was not without humor. At times as president of the Mennonite Board of Education (MC), he would stop at Goshen College and enjoy a meal with the students. Once, as he ate a meal featuring beans, the student serving as hostess at his table expressed her displeasure with beans. "I understand that some benefactor of the college gives a hundred pounds of these beans to the school each year," she said, with the inference she would really like to tell the donor off.

Bishop Yoder at the other end of the table looked up, smiled, and said, "Well, there is no better time than now, for it is me."

—"Bishop"

On one of his many journeys, Menno Simons was traveling by stage-coach. Because all the inside seats were taken, he sat outside next to the driver. Suddenly a group of armed riders approached, stopped the coach, and asked, "Is Menno Simons in there?" Menno reached back to open the door and said, "They want to know whether a Menno Simons is in there." After a short pause, he was given a negative answer, whereupon he turned to the riders with the words, "They say he is not in there." The riders continued on their way, and Menno's life was saved.

While some doubt that the event ever happened, or if it did, that it happened to some other Mennonite preacher, it is possible that persecuted Mennonites answered with double meaning.

—"Menno Simonszoon"

Nicknames were frequently used to distinguish among Low German Mennonites, particularly those with similar names. These nicknames were selected from occupations, places of residence, physical descriptions, or other associations: *Fromme Petasch* (Pious Peters, member of the Mennonite Brethren church); *Turksche Thiesse* (rough as a Turk Thiessen); *Fuelle* (lazy) *Wiens*; *Offenbarungs Reima* (a minister whose favorite scriptural text came from the book of Revelation, the *Offenbarung* in German).

*Eftje Panna* and *Sauntjwe Panna* referred to two men by the name of Penner. One had a wife named Eva and the other a wife named Susanna. *Kose Kloose* (Goat Klassen) was known for his pointed beard and *Schlopbeintje* (wooden sleeping benches) Wiebe reportedly had nine sleeping benches, each one providing sleeping accommodation for one or two children.

—"Nicknames"



Katie Funk Wiebe, author of many books and articles, is a freelance writer living in Wichita, Kansas.



## Supporting Role by Tom Brokaw

When Jennifer, our first child, was born, friends and other family members, in a gentle, teasing way, began casting me as a future father of the bride. Even before I mastered the diaper triangle fold, they had me giving away our daughter.

The refrain became even more familiar when Andrea and then Sarah arrived. Nonetheless, it barely registered. A wedding seemed a distant and abstract prospect, especially since I had grown up in a family of boys. Our only experience with weddings was to appear reasonably promising to the bride's family and get to the church on time.

Talk of marriage began to pick up again as our girls came of age. When they were in college I began to field more inquiries: "Any serious boyfriends yet, I mean, *really* serious?" It was a question that always surprised me a little. It seemed premature.

After all, whenever Jennifer, Andrea, and Sarah talked of marriage it was secondary to other interests, and highly speculative. Serious issues were medical school, film or music as a career, working with dysfunctional children.

So marriage remained, in my mind at least, a hazy possibility. Even as I shared the joy of friends who walked their daughters to the altar, I failed to see myself in the role.

It's possible that deep in my psyche I couldn't let go, that I had the conventional father reaction: "No young man is good enough for *my* daughter." But I don't think so. Indeed, when I thought about it at all, I wanted our daughters to marry, knowing firsthand what richness a good marriage added to life.

Besides, when Jennifer called from Dartmouth one night to say she'd been seeing a medical school classmate, a young man from Oklahoma, and wanted us to meet him, I knew instantly we were moving to a new level.

The young man, Allen, made all the right first impressions. He was polite, droll, bright, a sports enthusiast, and, best of all, crazy about

Jennifer. His father was a retired principal and coach, his mother a school librarian. In our family that kind of pedigree counts for a great deal.

Before long, Allen was a member of the extended family, winning the affection of the family matriarch, Grandma Jean. Jennifer's sisters, critical judges in these matters, were enthusiastic. My wife, Meredith, and I were grateful he didn't have an obsequious Sir and Ma'am style. He didn't laugh at my tennis, and he never stopped trying to win our small-change sports bets.

Finally, they settled on a date, one week after graduation. I thought we'd just show up at the church on the right weekend and have a wedding. This is another one of those differences between men and women, sort of like not asking for directions when you're lost.

We've always tried to be gender-free in our family, but to one degree or another, subconsciously or otherwise, women have been preparing for this since they played wedding as little girls.

Meredith moved with the energy and determination of Margaret Thatcher recapturing the Falkland Islands; she converted her office into a war room and quickly developed a big-picture strategy: a church wedding with an evening dinner dance at our home in rural New England.

At the outset, I stood off to the side, first confidently, then timidly, as Meredith and Jennifer huddled over the computer or worked the phones, politely but firmly dismissive of my suggestions. Occasionally I was called in as a consultant on parking or groomsmen's ties, but it was a minor role. I'm used to having a full voice, especially in family affairs, but on this one I was secretly relieved to be superfluous.

Reporting on a summit, covering a war or a Presidential campaign, is one thing. Finding a wedding dress, selecting flattering outfits for four bridesmaids, choosing music, booking enough rooms for 200 guests, meeting the minister, ordering the

flowers, most of all staying cool as calls come in on every detail and, so it seemed, from every guest, all requiring urgent attention, is another. My assignment was to stay out of the way, and so I happily went off to Nepal for a long-deferred trek.

When I returned 10 days before the ceremony, I did make discreet inquiries about the cost. The response I received amounted to what building contractors call a rough estimate. Translation: You're going to get roughed up, but what could be a better reason?

On the appointed day the hours seemed to move incredibly slowly and uncontrollably quickly. I wanted to occupy myself with something that would reflect the magnitude of the moment, but the best I could come up with was washing the getaway car.

Knowing that the family and friends had an informal pool on when I would begin to weep, I resolved to stay in control: Clint Eastwood as father of the bride, not Alan Alda.

The test came early when Jennifer walked into the living room fully dressed and coiffed for the ceremony. I wobbled as I flashed back to the day of her birth and the many triumphs and so few tiny trials along the way. She saved me when she examined herself in a full-length mirror, smiled mischievously and said, "Allen is getting a good women."

Even with my big moment coming on fast, I knew I was making a cameo appearance. Meredith, cool, elegant and stunning as mother of the bride, was the real parental star, having produced, directed, and written this movable romantic feast and celebration. Jennifer and her sisters as her bridesmaids were at this moment moving into a higher level in our relationship, still my daughters, but also women in an orbit more distinctly their own.

That only strengthened me as we started for the foyer and the final falling-in for the walk down the aisle. Meredith was still on the job, whispering final instructions to the flower girls, checking the dresses and bou-

continued on page 66



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Fall 1994

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# FESTIVAL

## *Quarterly*

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*A Farm Woman's Artistic Lens*



# Stories of Women

## **Amish Women: Lives and Stories, by Louise Stoltzfus**

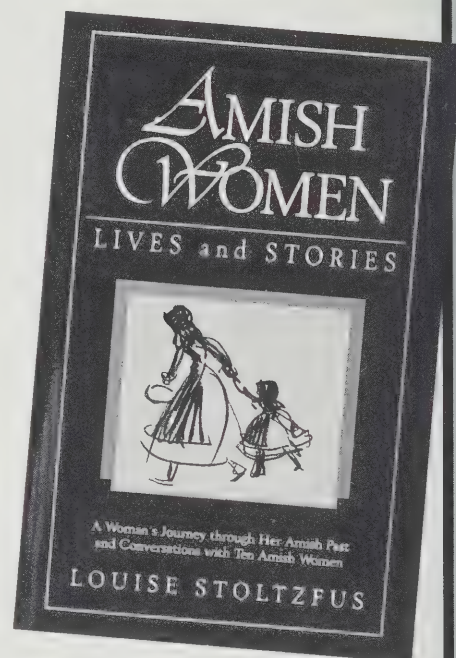
Little has been written about Amish women. How are they unique? How are they typical? How do they find expression in a place that values community togetherness above all else?

This generous and heartwarming book explores what it means to be a woman and to be Amish. The author, who was born and raised in a Lancaster County Amish family, weaves her stories through a series of interviews and interactions with Amish women, many of whom she has known most of her life.

Meet Naomi whose favorite author is C.S. Lewis. Susie who is an artist. And Esther who has lost two children and spends much of her time reaching out to other members of her community who have suffered loss.

A gentle, lyrical look at what it means to be an Amish woman.

5½ x 8½ • 123 pages • Black-and-white illustrations • hardcover with dustjacket • \$14.95



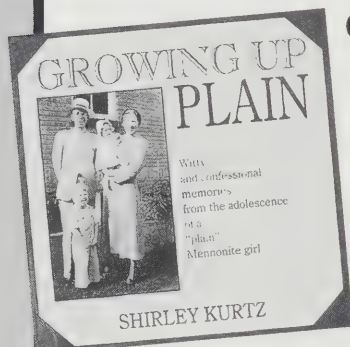
## **Growing Up Plain, by Shirley Kurtz**

What is it like to be a young woman who dresses "plain"? How does it feel to be so identifiably different? What allowed Shirley Kurtz to find warmth and humor in her Mennonite upbringing?

In this witty and lightly confessional memory, Kurtz unearths the painful and hilarious details of marching through adolescence.

While there is every adolescent's uncertainty in these pages, there is also the wonder of being loved. ("You have to understand this: my mother was doing her best. My mother wanted me to be happy.")

5½ x 5½ • 63 pages • 23 black-and-white illustrations • hardcover with dustjacket • \$9.95



## **A Mennonite Woman's Life photographs by Ruth Hershey (1895-1990) text by Phyllis Pellman Good**

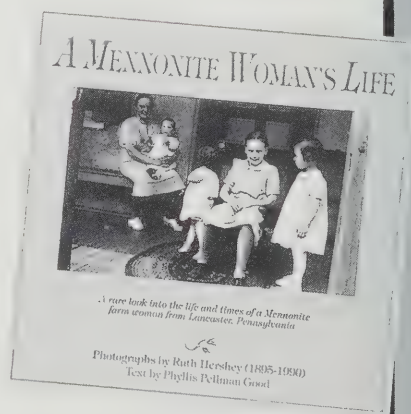
Mennonite women, whose lives stretched from the closing years of the last century and the early decades of the current one, were, for the most part, sturdy homemakers, mothers, and farm wives. One of these women, Ruth Hershey of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, kept a box camera near her children, her homestead, her garden, and her drop-in company. It accompanied her on excursions to town, the ocean, and visits with friends.

But as this rare collection of photographs shows, Mrs. Hershey recorded life with an unusually artistic flair.

The text explores the world of Mennonite women in the early part of this century.

"Recorded as it is by the intelligent lens of Ruth Hershey and the thoughtful descriptions of Phyllis Pellman Good, the book is a warm and lively portrait." —Washington Post

8 x 8 • 96 pages • 55 historic black-and-white photographs • paperback • \$11.95



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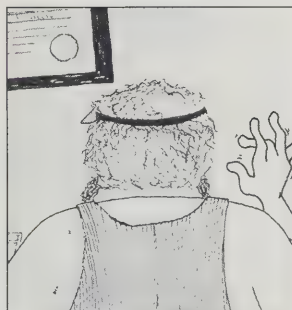
# FESTIVAL

## Quarterly

on the cover . . .



She may have appeared to be a traditional, mid-century, Mennonite farm woman, but Ruth Hershey saw life with an unusually artistic eye. She recorded this photograph of friends on the beach with the box camera she kept continually at hand. See story on page 24.



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## The Secret of the Old Graveyard

by **Susan Kimmel Wright**

Why do Nellie's parents have to be so different? Now they want to go to Colombia to adopt a little boy. But there are other things to worry about. Someone is sneaking into the graveyard behind Nellie's house at night.

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by **Susan Kimmel Wright**

Most teenage girls babysit, but only Nellie and Peggy end up with an abandoned, abused baby and a visit from the police! Here is a lesson about the value of life and the meaning of real love. A sequel to *The Secret of the Old Graveyard*.

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by **Kim D. Pritts**

illustrated by **Matthew Archambault**

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## Where the Eagles Fly

by **Ruth Nulton Moore**

Both Greg and the Captain are like crippled birds. Movement from foster home to foster home has made Greg lonely and wary. He is so tired of being the new boy on the block. Old age and poor health have left the Captain with little joy except fading memories. Then they meet. And risk disaster as they search for the place where the eagles fly.

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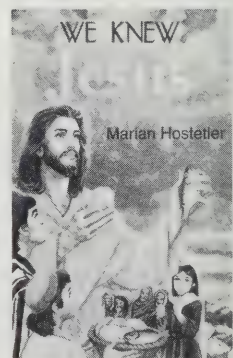
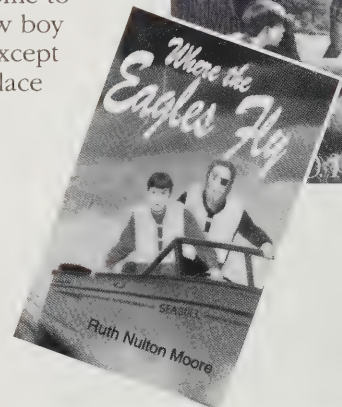
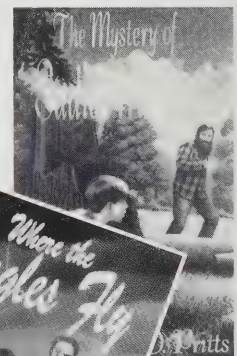
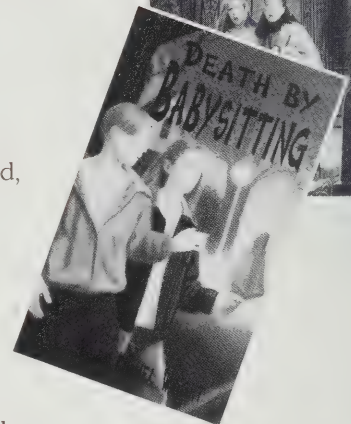
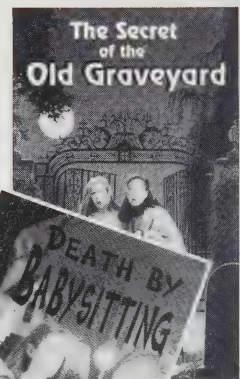


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*Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good*

## EDITORIAL

# Releasing Bender's Grip

Christianity has found many different expressions through the centuries. One of those is our own Anabaptist version of Christian faith and life.

Anabaptism likewise has resulted in many different expressions of Christianity through the years. Perhaps the most prominent of these expressions in recent times has been the "vision" set forth by Harold S. Bender 50 years ago.

The anniversary of Bender's vision statement has occasioned numerous celebrations and deliberations during the past year.

A few observations.

1. What H.S. Bender did for the church two generations ago was significant. God used this gifted, devoted teacher to inspire at least one generation of leaders, perhaps two.

2. Bender's succinct vision statement (discipleship, community of believers, the ethic of love and nonresistance) captured the essence of Anabaptist Christianity. It charted a path of ideas for Mennonites to embrace as they became more modern and as the clear identity of what it meant to be a Mennonite became less visible.

This three-point summary was like a piece of clothing which modern, more educated Mennonites could wear with comfort and conviction as they left the farm and entered the professions, shedding most of their other distinctives. Bender's vision became the progressive "plain garb." This saved many for the church.

3. Bender's vision became an icon to some. An icon's strength is that it captures the essence of faith in a simple, unified rendering. The disadvantage of an icon lies in its grip on its devotees—the framework around the icon seems to have no flexibility.

4. All renewal movements among Mennonites in North America (the mission movement, the nonconformity movement, the Anabaptist vision movement, and the charismatic movement, to name a few in the last century) seem to spawn detractors as soon as the movement begins to look like an icon. The past generation has witnessed a horde of Mennonite scholars taking exception to Bender's vision of Anabaptist Christianity.

But in spite of all the doctoral the-

ses, academic papers, and icon-breaking lectures of the past generation, the Bender vision still holds an amazing grip, not only on Mennonites of North America, but also on Mennonites around the world. Nevertheless, the Bender three-point formula is looking less and less adequate for the next generation, unless it is dethroned as an icon and broadened to include a larger vision of Christianity.

5. A rather clear call has arisen during the past year from a younger group of Mennonite writers and leaders for a broader understanding of the Anabaptist expression of Christianity. This takes into account what appears to be a deficiency in Bender's formula. What is the place of worship and spirituality in the expression of our faith?

Discipleship, community, and peacemaking will be enriched by an infusion of the Spirit and worship. For too long Bender's formula has been set in opposition to expressions of the Christian inner life of prayer, worship, and spiritual discipline.

It seems doubtful that Bender himself intended this. But as Bender's disciples elevated his formula to icon status, the vacuum increased. Consequently some Mennonites have little time for "that Anabaptist stuff," because it strikes them as a shallow shell. Other Mennonites have found great meaning from Bender's summary of faith, but are in danger of elevating his formula above the Bible and the discerning community.

6. Perhaps this anniversary is as good a time as any to release Bender's grip on the church. If the icon-defending parts of our church can let the icon go, other parts of our church may encounter some of the insights of Anabaptism for the first time.

Perhaps if we can arrange a ceasefire between ethics and piety, a broader understanding will emerge among our various peoples, both in North America and around the world.

We do not detract from any leader's contribution by updating his or her ideas and visions. Holding on too tightly leads to a shallow legalism. Perhaps it's time to thank God once again for the gift of H. S. Bender, put his contributions in perspective, and move on into the coming century.—MG



I want to commend you for your review of *Mennonite Peacemaking* by Driedger and Kraybill, as it appeared in the Winter 1994 issue of *FQ*.

I am working in Egypt now, on a two year leave of absence from the Ottawa Office of MCCC where I served for 18 years. During that time I often wrestled with the issue that you raise. I believe one can do quite a lot of "peacemaking" work with a somewhat different framework than that set forth by Driedger and Kraybill.

The issue surfaces in many places. I encourage you to articulate the perspectives that you raised in this review.

— William Janzen  
Cairo, Egypt

I like your variety of topics, including your inside back page essay from the larger world. I would really miss your book reviews, film ratings, and *Reclassified* by Katie Funk Wiebe.

Even though my Mennonite heritage is midwest and yours is Lancaster County, I appreciate your thoughtful editorials.

Peter Dyck is always very readable and I often use your book service. I, too, appreciate the humor of Emerson Leshner and others.

An idea. Are there prophets who speak to the changing rural culture? For example—What will be the Mennonite influence on farming practices in the future? Or will there be any Mennonites left in agri-business? What questions should young people in rural areas be asking? How should rural churches be changing? Do our rural cultural roots still make a difference in the wider church?

I look forward to your video guide. Thank you in advance.

— Lorene Good  
Armington, Illinois

My suggestion for your publication would be to run a series of articles

on how our churches can re-capture a more serious sense of community.

In this age where all the emphasis is on family, I'm afraid that most Mennonites have relaxed the need for Mennonites to be connected to other members.

— Walter J. Quiring  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

We appreciate the articles on the arts and music. We enjoy the emphasis on the international aspect of the Mennonite church, the writers and articles from the worldwide church. Keep up the good work!

— Leonard and Elsa Bergey  
Chesapeake, Virginia

In terms of content, you are doing at least one good thing: you are helping bring art into the Mennonite church. As an artist and a child of the MTV generation I am worried about how little I connect with my home church. Part of our disconnectedness is due to ideological differences, but part is a simple communication problem. The church is not presenting the gospel in a format that is at all interesting to someone who processes information visually and emotionally.

More seriously, the Mennonite church has been slow to acknowledge this rift, and even antagonistic toward attempts to bridge it. Artists have always played a vibrant, prophetic role in society, and that influence is particularly clear in this decade. I would prefer that artists and the church work together, not in spite of each other. (As far as I'm concerned, feel free to push a bit harder.)

— Lowell Brown  
Grantham, Pennsylvania

The editors welcome letters. Letters for publication must include the writer's name and address and should be sent to Festival Quarterly, 3513 Old Philadelphia Pike, Intercourse, PA 17534. The editors regret that at times the volume of mail necessitates publishing only a representative cross-section. Letters are subject to editing for reasons of space or clarity.



"Ah, here is your fax now."



# "You ALWAYS Cut Out the BEST Parts!"

(Things I've learned as an editor)

by Wally Kroeker



It was a typical church conference with many papers presented, reports tabled, and resolutions passed. Dozens of people spoke. A million words were uttered in one form or another.

Back at the office I chiseled, compressed, and burnished the proceedings into a 2,000-word article for the magazine I edited.

When it was published, a conference official was pleased. "You reported it just as it happened," he said. "You didn't edit anything."

An important lesson: much of the editor's best work will go unnoticed.

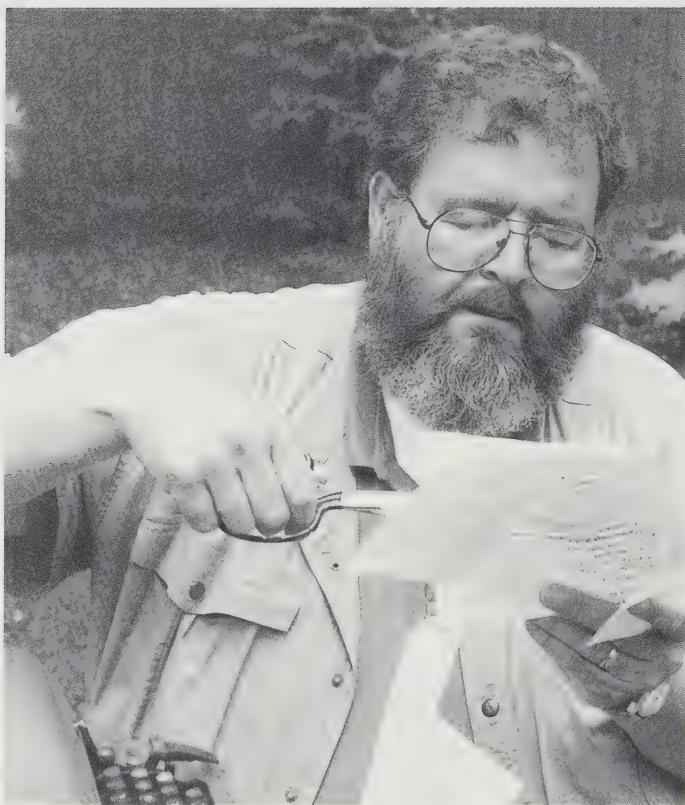
After a quarter century in this business I'm reminded of the old line that editing is like being a football coach—you have to be smart enough to do it well, but dumb enough to think it's important.

I qualify on the latter point, at least.

My task is to root around in other people's lives, pick out the things I find interesting, and then assemble them in ways that I hope readers find interesting.

I prune away verbiage and rearrange sentences so that ideas flow better. Samuel Johnson, the chap who invented the dictionary back in 1755, said an editor's job was to "correct what is corrupt, and to explain what is obscure."





## We Need Editors

One thing I've learned is that in writing, as in life, we need each other. We can all use a second opinion, feedback, a larger community.

Someone has described the editor as the referee between the writer and the reader. Many great writers had editors: T.S. Eliot had Ezra Pound; Ernest Hemingway had Max Perkins.

Editors can make writers look good. A pastor gave me an article that had wonderful ideas but was horribly written. It took hours to massage into shape. When it appeared he said, "Thanks for not changing anything." I took it as a compliment.

Like it or not, we all have a relationship with an editor. As you read this magazine or watch "60 Minutes" you are subject to the choices of editors. Someone else is shaping what you see or read, what you learn about an event or situation.

People complain about this, but it's what they want. A hundred years ago, when entire speeches were printed verbatim in the newspaper, you'd have to read it all yourself to get the real news in the middle or near the end. We don't have time for that today. That's why we have editors—to pick out the nuggets for us. Unfortunately, we don't always agree with their selection.

## Don't Pre-Judge

One early lesson I learned was: Don't be deceived by appearances.

It was 1968 and I was a news reporter in Regina, Saskatchewan. A federal election had been called, and I was sent to cover a nomination meeting. When I arrived

at the hall I noticed the glossy posters and placards for the three sharply dressed candidates—two lawyers and one sociology professor.

I took plenty of notes as they spoke. After the third one sat down there was a commotion at the back of the hall and a little man elbowed his way through the crowd to the platform. He was a late entry in the race.

He wore a creased suit. He wasn't polished like the other speakers. He didn't speak well. His words didn't flow in smooth phrases.

I was so sure he wasn't a serious candidate that I didn't even take notes. Wow, was that ever a mistake.

You already know who won.

Talk about feeling sick. Here I was without notes to write a story that was supposed to be for next morning's page one.

The rumpled little man bailed me out. He lent me the manuscript of his speech so that I could take it back to the office and play catch-up.

I learned something I should have known from Scripture: "Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in shabby clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes . . . have you not become judges with evil thoughts?" (James 2:2-4).

## Get to the Point

A fundamental of editing is getting to the point in a hurry. Readers are too impatient to wade through yards of print to find the real news; they want it at the top, in the lead paragraph. Better yet, they want it summarized in five or six words in the headline so they can decide at a glance whether to bother reading the story.

"Don't back in and wiggle around," the city editor yells. "This isn't parallel parking."

Alas, not every story can be boiled down to three lines in a lead or five words in a headline. A lot of truth and context may be missing. Yet the reading habits of today's society demand that we do this. People will complain, but it really suits their grazing habits.

So after writing and rewriting a few hundred lead paragraphs that writers have "backed into," it becomes second nature to go straight to the marrow. Trouble is, it can become a habit in life, and others find it irritating. You become known for lacking patience, for being too blunt, for not always remembering that beating around the bush has value as a social lubricant.

Sometimes it takes a strong stomach to be an editor's friend.

## Love That Mail

Editors live by the mail. News often comes in the mail. Articles come in the mail.

And letters from readers come in the mail.

Letters can be a narcotic to an editor, not only those that praise but also those that criticize. Most of us get a rush from hostile mail. It makes us appear prophetic and evenhanded. An editor who is everyone's friend probably isn't doing a good job.



The only hostile letters we don't like are those that have a valid point.

It's amazing what people say in letters. When editing a church magazine, I received letters dripping with venom that ended, "In the bonds of Calvary's love."

"Dear pacifist pukes," one letter began. Every third line contained profanity. It didn't get printed.

One otherwise good letter contained the words "ass" and "hell" (not a theological reference). I deleted them. The author called afterwards that I had "cut out the best parts!"

"You mean," I responded, "that the best parts of your letter were the words *ass* and *hell*?"

One law of editing is that the portion you edit will always, in the author's opinion, be the best part of the article.

You'd think editors stay up late carefully searching every article for "the best part." As soon as we find it we shout, "Aha, there it is! Out it goes." After all, the last thing we'd want to run is anything that's really good. Everyone knows editors want pabulum in their publications.

If we always cut out the best parts, why are we still accused of sensationalizing everything?

Once during a flurry of angry letters over some pressing issue, an elderly man wrote, "Let me tell you something very personal. I think a lot of the criticism would cease if you would shave your beard. Some people associate the style of such men as hoodlums, rightly or wrongly."

I appreciated the tip. The last thing I wanted to do was dry up my source of letters. I've had a beard ever since.

A vital lesson I learned was to never answer a letter on the day it arrives. We wordsmiths know how to draw blood so it's best to take a walk and let the bile cool. Often I found it necessary to stretch the one-day waiting period into a week, and sometimes even a month.

One or two responses have been mellowing for years.

## What I Meant Was...

In journalism you are never more than a keystroke away from unutterable humiliation.

Editors make plenty of mistakes. Some are noticed by readers. But not all.

In the 1930s journalist Herbert Mayes worked for a publisher who was offered a new novel by an unknown writer. It was a period novel about the American Civil War. He responded, "A period novel! About the Civil War! Who needs the Civil War now—who cares?" And so Margaret Mitchell took her manuscript to another publisher, and *Gone with the Wind* sold millions of copies and won the Pulitzer Prize.

Then there was the editor who wrote a rejection letter in 1889: "I'm sorry, Mr. Kipling, but you just don't know how to use the English language."

The bane of every editor's life is typographical errors. One moment they're nowhere to be seen; the next they scream from the printed page in full-throated song. I have learned that some errors only appear after the



magazine is in print.

Sometimes these typos simply mottle the complexion, like a pimple. Other times they completely alter the meaning.

How do you explain to the conference moderator that your editorial meant to say "his ideas are worth noting" rather than "his ideas are worth nothing."

Typos serve a useful purpose. They amuse careful readers.

And keep editors humble.

## Truth Is Better Than Untruth

Journalists like to think they can save the world. They are bolstered by Thomas Jefferson's line, "I would rather live in a country with newspapers and no government, than in a country with government and no newspapers." Some journalists believe that if only we had more truth about each other, enlightened humanity would finally do right. I'm not so sure anymore. Our society is bloated with news and information, yet look at us.

But this I know: Deception has no place in the church, the embodiment of Christ. After years of seeing the church in both nakedness and splendor, I've learned that the people of God are seldom weaker than when they deceive one another.

And they are seldom more powerful than when they've been completely overtaken by God's love and have the gumption to tell the truth about themselves.

The same Gospel that says "For God so loved the world" also says "The truth will make you free."

*Wally Kroeker, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is currently editor of The Marketplace.*



# We Gave Up the Kissing Part, *Long Ago* and Without Protest

by Scott Holland

He regretted that we gave up the kissing part, long ago and without protest. But Menno Coblentz was unwilling to abandon sacramental art for good taste. "It wouldn't be Anabaptist," he said. I thought about my old friend Menno yesterday while reading Salman Rushdie on the holy wonders of books, bread, and kisses. Returning to the imaginary homeland of his boyhood, Rushdie writes:

I grew up kissing books and bread. In our house, whenever anyone dropped a book or let fall a chapati or a "slice," which was our word for a triangle of buttered leavened bread, the fallen object was required not only to be picked up but also kissed, by way of apology for a clumsy act of disrespect. I was as careless as any child and, accordingly, during my childhood years, I kissed a large number of "slices" and also my fair share of books.

Devout households in India often contained, and still contain, persons in the habit of kissing holy books. But we kissed everything. We kissed dictionaries and atlases. We kissed Enid Blyton novels and Superman comics. If I'd ever dropped the telephone directory I'd probably have kissed that too.

All this happened before I had ever kissed a girl. In fact it would almost be true, true enough for a fiction writer, anyhow, to say that once I started kissing girls, my activities with regards to books and bread lost some of their special excitement. But one never forgets one's first loves.

Bread and books: food for the body and food for the soul—what could be more worthy of our respect, and even love? (from Rushdie's *Is Nothing Sacred?*)

Rushdie knows that our holiest affections, our most spiritual desires, our deepest human longings, our creative words, our important thoughts, and our ultimate concerns pass through physicality; they are embodied. We are not spirits in the world; we are flesh

and bone. With a *fatwa* placed on his head by Islamic fundamentalists, he understands well that all thoughts inhabit a vulnerable, fleshly temple.

Saint John Chrysostom, the eloquent bishop of the fourth century, the father of the Eastern Orthodox Church, said something quite intriguing about the kissing part. He made the enchanting assertion that because we receive the Eucharist or the Holy Communion through our lips, our lips are the most blessed of all our body's members. Therefore, we honor both God and our lips through giving kisses, and thus symbolize the mysterious union of spirit and matter.

This happy theological claim does not represent a break with the biblical tradition. In at least six New Testament passages we are exhorted to greet one another with a holy kiss. Romans 16:16, "Greet one another with a holy kiss"; First Corinthians 16:20, "Greet one another with a holy kiss"; First Thessalonians 5:26, "Greet all the believers with a holy kiss"; First Peter 5:14, "Greet one another with the kiss of love." In the seventh chapter of Luke's Gospel Jesus declares: "You gave me no kiss, but from the time she came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for he has loved much; but those who are forgiven little, love little."

I once went to my large collection of scholarly biblical commentaries to gain some insight on these passages, to better understand the kissing part. I found, without exception, that my commentators were quite embarrassed about these texts. Most said, "The holy kiss was widely practiced in the early church, but apparently led to problems and was prudently discontinued as an acceptable Christian greeting."

In fact, J.B. Phillips, the proper British Bible translator, is predictably bourgeois in his best-selling paraphrase. "Greet one another with a handshake," he writes. Kenneth Taylor's popular *Living Bible* extends this safe, middle-class respectability: "Shake hands warmly with one another."





Artwork by Cheryl Benner



The practice of the holy kiss was prudently discontinued, the commentators conclude. Now the Eastern Orthodox kiss icons, Catholics kiss rosary beads, Jews kiss the Torah, Muslims kiss books and bread, Presbyterians kiss only their spouses, yet in my home congregation in Ohio, I knew some old Mennonite men who stubbornly clung to the whole ordinance of communion and kissed living saints and sometimes even sinners. I still remember one of the last times Menno Coblentz kissed me; my body remembers.

We had just finished the Lord's Supper, that sensuous ritual in which we take the primordial material elements of life—break them, crush them, eat them, drink them—in remembrance of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus. Menno knelt in front of me, placed my feet in a large basin of warm water, and began to massage my lower legs, ankles, and feet. He pressed hard like a baker kneading stiff dough, driving his thick fingers between each toe, mortal flesh separating mortal flesh, forming a strange but eternal union. He carelessly splashed water over the lip of the porcelain tub and it ran freely onto the oak floor. Because human love is always messy and can never be contained in sanctified, churchly vessels. After gently drying each foot, he stood, extended the right hand of fellowship, and pulled me up firmly into his body space. Although he's been dead for years, I can still feel his chapped lips on my cheek and his course, calloused hand on the back of my neck. I can still see his mischievous eyes and smell his stale breath when he whispered, "I'll never forget that day we spent together in Holmes County, will you?" No Menno, I won't.

Because a kiss is not just a kiss. Like a well performed baptism or communion, it is a symbolic intensification of all the mysteries and ecstasies folded into the ordinary fabric of daily existence. The stubble of Menno's beard and his rough, dry lips on my face carried me back to an extraordinary day in Holmes County.

It all started when I was pastor of First Mennonite Church. It was World Communion Sunday, and I preached a rather romantic message on community. "I Believe in the Communion of Saints," was my sermon title. I suggested that we know God most intimately and most perfectly in the community called church, through mutual submission or yieldedness to one another. That was a long time ago.

In the sermon I made a passing, playful reference to White Jonas Stutzman, an eccentric, nineteenth century, Holmes County Amish bishop, who dressed all in white and crafted a large hickory chair for Jesus to sit in when he returns in the second coming. Jesus—in Stutzman's theology—was expected to return from heaven to rule the earth, not from Jerusalem, Rome, or Constantinople, but from a hickory rocker in Millersburg, Ohio! A charming *ex cathedra* indeed.

After the service, old Menno Coblentz approached me with fiery excitement in his eyes. "I know that Weiss Jonas story, Scott! There are rumors that the *hecka schtool*—the hickory chair—is still around in the loft of someone's barn near Berlin."

"Really, Menno?"

"I have an idea Scott," he continued. "Oh, I know

you're probably too busy with the church and with college school teaching for such foolishness, but what do ya say we go look for that chair, you and me?"

I think I surprised both myself and Menno when I answered, "Yeah, let's do it."

Redeeming the time, Menno grinned, "Tomorrow morning, six-thirty?"

"We're on, brother. We're on!"

Driving down Highway 62 with this retired farmer, I began to realize how little I really knew him. We had taken communion together; we had even washed one another's feet. We had discussed church business on many occasions. Yet I felt I was in the presence of a stranger that morning.

It was only a forty-minute drive to Holmes County, the home of the largest Amish settlement in the world. But before we reached the county line Menno asked apologetically, "Uh, do you mind if we try to find a bathroom? This damned prostate; I gotta get it fixed one of these days."

Damned? From the pious lips of Menno Coblentz? Something interesting was beginning to happen. We pulled off at a Texaco station.

Back in the car and on the road he said, "You know I always felt called to be a preacher, but the lot never fell on me. Never fell on me."

He gazed out the window at the passing autumn scenery and sighed, "I'm almost eighty years old. If I had my life to live over again I'd change a lot. I'd take more risks, and I sure wouldn't worry so much about yielding to the church. *Gelassenheit*, you know. Aah, life is too short. I want to yield to life."

The feelings became so close we could reach out and touch them.

"Hey Scott, there's Levi Schrock's place. Pull back there between the house and the barn. He knows the Stutzman story."

A white-bearded man with a tattered straw hat limped out of the barn. "Menno Coblentz! *Wie gehts?*"

Levi Schrock knew the story but he didn't have a clue as to the whereabouts of the chair. He had heard it was still around though. He suggested that we talk to Fannie Stutzman. Her Mose was part of that same Stutzman tribe.

As we walked back to the car after inspecting Levi's new out-building, Menno mumbled, "Too bad Levi didn't know more."

I agreed, "Too bad."

On our way to Fannie Stutzman's farm, Menno announced, "I've never told a preacher this, but just after World War Two I did something, well, something kind of bad. You know I had an egg stand in the Arcade Market in downtown Canton?"

"Yes, you've told me that."

"Well," Menno hesitated, "because of our church's nonresistance doctrine, word got out that Mennonites were yellow and afraid to fight. The man in the fruit stand—Price was his name—started breaking some of my eggs. One day he even broke one on the front of my jacket.

"Fight like a man!" he'd say.



"Mostly I just tried to ignore him. I shared this at prayer meeting, and everybody, especially Bishop Johns, was proud of me. Proud that I didn't fight. Then, one day—I don't know what got into me—he started breakin' my eggs again, and I punched him, hard as I could, right in the face. Knocked him out! The police came. It was real serious."

Menno offered a cautious, transgressive smile. "And Ruthie. . . do you remember Ruthie? Well, Ruthie was afraid that Bishop Johns would find out, and I'd be put out of the church. She was worried sick. Worried more about what Johns would think than what I felt. I could never talk about it with Ruthie. I could never talk about it at church. I wanted to. I really wanted to. I felt real bad about it—punchin' Price—but I had to do something, and, oh boy, you should have seen him go down! Ha! There's Fannie's place."

While Menno was back at the outhouse, I quizzed Fannie about the chair. She was a stern, practical, no-nonsense kind of woman. "Ja, Ja, and what will you do with this chair if you find it?"

Menno found his way into the kitchen. "No luck, Menno," I reported.

"Too bad," he said.

I agreed, "Too bad."

That day we traveled from farm to farm—and from personal story to personal story—in search of the hickory chair. No luck. It was mid-afternoon. We were both tired and hungry. Menno directed me to a restaurant where he said they served the best chicken noodle soup in the world.

While drinking coffee and eating chicken noodle soup and warm rolls, Menno became a bit philosophical. "You know what I admire about White Jonas Stutzman?" he asked. "He wasn't afraid to be different. He wore white when the rules said you had to dress in black. And he got away with it! How did he ever get away with it?"

He shook his head and frowned. "We say we believe in nonconformity. Why, we're the most conforming people in the world. When I was a boy the bishop paid a visit to my folks to tell Mother that she was making her cape dresses too fashionable. Can you imagine a cape dress too fashionable? Dad really surprised me and the bishop. In a kind of calm anger he said, 'Enos, your words today aren't worth the buggy grease it took to carry you over here.' I was proud of my dad, but I remember feeling a funny mix of pride and fear in the pit of my stomach as I watched Enos Troyer's buggy go down our long lane to the main road.

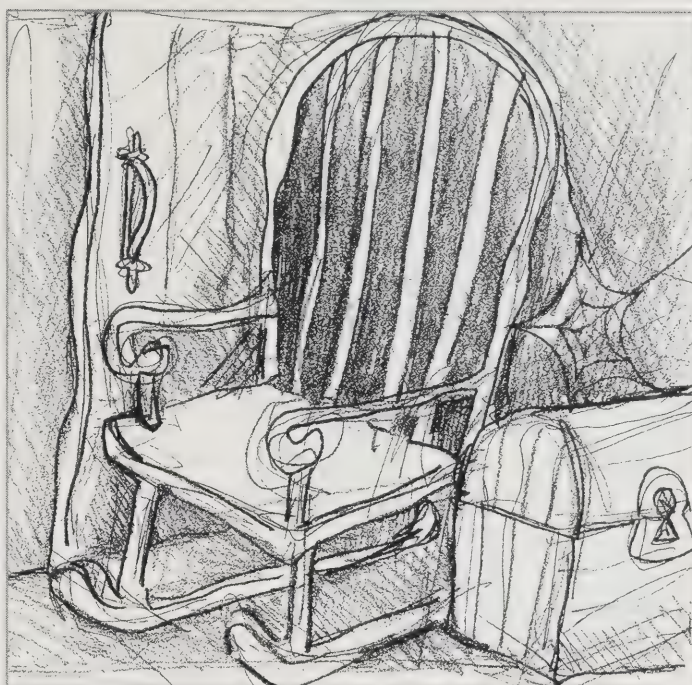
"Our family eventually left the Amish and joined the Mennonite church," Menno reminded me. "Not that it's been that much better," he confessed.

"I grew up with a lotta rules, a lotta rules," he said. "Church was sometimes a mean place. Church should be a place where you can be yourself. You don't have to all be the same to have fellowship. You do have to respect each other though. . ."

He paused. Looking deeply into my eyes he said, "Too bad we didn't find that chair."

I again agreed, "Too bad."

Neither of us was surprised to look down and



discover that the best chicken noodle soup in the world had become the body of Christ and that the coffee had turned as red as blood. I do believe in the communion of saints.

The last time I saw Menno he was in the Walnut Creek Nursing Home. He was old and sick and forgetful, very forgetful. As we reminisced about our years together at First Mennonite, he didn't seem to remember any of my earnest sermons. He had forgotten the clever and cunning decisions we made at endless congregational business meetings. He couldn't recall the doctrinal arguments we often had in Sunday school and church council. He didn't even mention First Mennonite's historic conflicts, fights, and divisions. He did, however, remember the kissing part and the day of grand adventure in Holmes County. Menno Coblentz died remembering the kissing part.

As an elder in the church he used to instruct this young minister, "An important part of your calling as a preacher is to remind people that they're going to die," he would say. Menno was very heavy about this. "At every funeral you preach it would be good to say to the congregation with conviction 'You too will die.' Say it a few times to help it sink in. Folks don't like to think about the dying part of life.

"And at every communion service it wouldn't hurt, you know, to remind the congregation that we used to practice the holy kiss as an ordinance of the church."

As I remember Menno's promise about the way of all flesh—that I, too, will join him in the dark journey across the great divide—I am thankful that, in this life, the old man's chapped lips imparted to me the strange taste of the stubborn, extravagant, excessive love of God, and that his trembling, careless hands splashed the reckless grace of God deep into my body and soul.

*Scott Holland lives in McKeesport, Pennsylvania.*



# When All Is Not Well on Your Board

by Phyllis Pellman Good

Most nonprofit boards are well-intentioned—and ineffective. So say Chet Raber and Edgar Stoesz, who have spent years consulting boards and attending board meetings. While their analysis may not be news, the situation is more critical than before. The reason? For-profit institutions no longer provide the sorts of services to society that they once did. So there are more nonprofit institutions than ever, competing for dollars from persons who are weary of requests and increasingly selective about where they give. The times call for astute boards, but most board members are too busy or timid, or simply unaware, to improve.

Raber and Stoesz are in no mood to give up on the situation, however. They grant the problem: “We’re overrun with institutions that do just a fraction of what they were formed to do. We don’t need more

institutions—just more who do what they’re supposed to do.”

The problem begins, they believe, with a misunderstanding about what boards are meant to do. A board’s task is to lead, not manage. “Too often,” says Edgar, “board members are chosen because they are recognized for their management skills, not for their ability to lead.

“Boards are ultimately responsible for everything that does or doesn’t happen—but most don’t act that way. They should use their time identifying ‘ends,’ outcomes, vision, mission. But boards, tragically, spend most of their time doing ‘means’ work.”

“That’s because most board members understand ‘means’ work, how to get things done, management questions,” observes Chet.

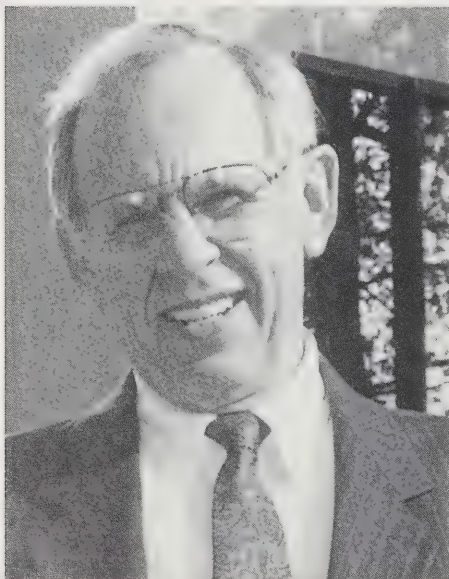
Personal reluctance may also

stand in the way of effective board action. “I like to compare board work to getting a train up and running,” Chet goes on. “Vision is tough, hard work. That’s *creating* the train.

“Aligning is getting people on the train. It means arm-twisting, doing what most directors don’t like to do. They fear taking initiative. They don’t like confrontation. So they get only half-baked agreements.

“Inspiring is getting the train to go. Thinking of ideas isn’t great, unless you can align people, put a budget and plan together—and get the plan in motion.”

The task is daunting, and Stoesz and Raber agree that many persons have had little practice. “Most people start working as teens—in a *doing* mode. Gradually they move into more of a thinking mode, but they often get stuck and don’t move on into leadership. Leadership is



Edgar Stoesz and Chester A. Raber are the authors of the recent book, *Doing Good Better, How to Be an Effective Board Member of a Nonprofit Organization* (Good Books).





“Most organizations  
serve up to only a fraction of their capacity.  
I don’t know any that serves more  
than 70% of its potential.”

where many boards are weak!”

An obstacle, in addition to personal reluctance, hinders effective board action, the two believe. It is a society-wide caution about authority. “Most of us were raised in an authoritarian mode. That was followed by rebellion, which was followed by a search. And the search is this: If we don’t want authority or laissez-faire or the fad of the month, what do we want? People often realize they want participative leadership, but they don’t know how to get there. We don’t know how to make decisions without voting. So in times of anxiety, we go back to authoritarianism.

“People talk about consensus, but they don’t know how to reach it. This is a society-wide problem—from the government to the church. Just look at the Catholic church and the convulsions they’re going through.”

This ambiguity about authority expresses itself in many ways, often to the detriment of an institution. “Too often boards come to agreement too quickly,” Edgar says. “We don’t want to rock the boat, so we take a ‘lowest common denominator’ agreement. On this point, Mennonites are particularly vulnerable. We let stuff go on for years which we know is not appropriate.”

Several other elements in Mennonite theology add complexity to the task of being a Mennonite board member and leader, Edgar observes. “In the church, where we believe that collective wisdom comes from the gathered group, the

leader has a difficult task. The leader must get people to participate, must draw wisdom from the group.”

Chet addresses another related element. “‘Servant leaders’ is a difficult term. It can look passive. I find it more helpful to think about ‘participative leadership.’ That style of leader asks everyone what their concerns are, what they believe should happen. All of that should then be written on a flip chart—the sign that this is our proposal together.

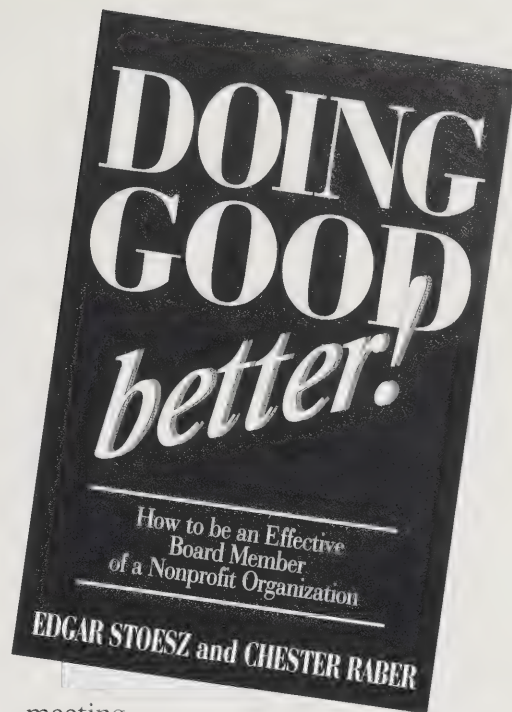
“An authoritarian leader doesn’t want participation.”

Stoesz and Raber find the misdirected methods of many boards sadly amusing. “I often say that chairpersons are the people on the board with the smallest bladders. While they’re at the bathroom—out of earshot and unable to protest—they’re chosen as the chairs,” grins Edgar.

Another common practice disturbs them. “Most meetings happen too soon,” Chet comments. “There hasn’t been sufficient preparation for the meeting. Too often proposals are half-baked.

“Participative management needs well-prepared proposals. Then they won’t spend time arguing about the data. Additionally, those bringing the proposal should gather all the ideas that the board has come up with. That does two things—removes the competition about whose idea is best and takes away the need to respond to each idea as it’s presented.”

Edgar recalls a recent Habitat for Humanity International board



meeting which he chaired. “We had to deal with a very sensitive and complex issue. Because I was aware of this, I put a lot of effort into preparing for the discussion. The matter cleared the Board in 30 minutes. They could see the data—and the many sides of the situation—because of the work done ahead of time.”

Stoesz and Raber carry the conviction that nonprofit organizations—from congregational councils to school boards to library and United Way Agencies to churchwide boards—are needed more than ever. They believe just as firmly that most of them could do their work better. “Most organizations serve up to only a fraction of their capacity. I don’t know any that serves more than 70% of its potential,” comments Edgar.

Chet points out a related difficulty. “Leaders usually get so little payback because of this ineffectiveness. So they don’t feel like putting more into it because they get so little out of it.”

Stoesz’ and Raber’s analysis and candor should lend courage to those who sense that not all is well on the boards on which they serve.



# THE PASTOR'S STUDY

a short story by Dora Dueck

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My cousin Mel and I bumped into each other at the Superstore last week and he said, why don't you drop in at the office sometime, I'd love to see you.

Remember that game of hide-and-seek at your place? he went on, grinning, with you nearly suffocating in the hay because you didn't want to get caught, you never wanted to be IT? I laughed with him and then I shivered from the cold rising out of the aisle-long freezer bin full of concentrated juices, ice cream, popsicles, frozen waffles. It made me eager to accept his invitation, as if it was a sweater he was offering me.

I always considered Mel my favorite cousin, on the strength of that one visit to our farm. He lived in Winnipeg, and I grew up in Alberta, so we didn't see each other much, but our mothers, who are sisters, made a big deal of the fact that we were nearly twins—born in the same year (1950, right on the half-century mark), the same month, the same week, just two days apart, Mel arriving first, and both of them got what they had wanted, a boy for Aunt Elizabeth and a girl for my mother.

I don't remember how old we both were when Uncle Peter, Aunt Elizabeth, and their Melvin came to the farm. I think, though, it was the only time he was there. Of course I saw him here; we traveled to Winnipeg often enough. Mom used to complain that her relatives never came in our direction, we *always* had to drive out to Manitoba. She emphasized *always* and stretched it, and it reminded me of the boring two days it took to make the trip across the prairies.

I do know that the year Mel was there I was beginning to think a lot about being a girl. I mean I had that sense of categories shifting, a separateness that felt sometimes like a wall being built up. It was something I couldn't stop, but it bothered me anyway, as if I was losing something important on the other side of it. At school we girls were starting to huddle in

groups to face off against the boys, instead of running into each other like the cross threads of fabric as before.

With Mel it was different. We played together terrifically for an entire week. He was imaginative and didn't have the kind of meanness, the reversals, that I sometimes felt with my brothers or Cecil, the neighbor's boy in my grade, one day this and the next day that. I fantasized the whole time that we *were* twins, separated at birth and miraculously re-united. One of our mothers—and I thought it must have been mine—had sacrificed one of her babies for the sake of her beloved barren sister.

I shifted my shopping cart a little, stepped back further from the freezer. I'd like to, I said, but unless we set a date I won't come, you know. It was true. There's that kindred spirit from so far back, but it doesn't mean we make an effort to see each other now. My statement seemed to startle him, but then he looked appreciative, relieved even, and he said, well come on Wednesday afternoon, then, if that suits you.

We've added on at the church, he said. I've got a new office. You studied design; I think you'll enjoy it.

So it's Wednesday, and I've been to visit Mel in his brand new pastor's office. And I'm back home again, feeling depressed. They call him Pastor Mel.

I played with the word pastor while he used it, over and over, trying to conjure something pastoral, something green and soft and dotted with sheep, but all I heard was pasteurized and that didn't lead me anywhere helpful beyond stainless steel vats filled with milk and a maze of pipes taking it somewhere. (My father was a dairy farmer.) Another part of me was evaluating the room, not because of my earlier studies, but out of habit—the habit learned from traveling, the necessity to discern quickly the meaning of unfamiliar places.



He opened up to me,  
but all I could feel was the room.  
I notice spaces and I knew immediately:  
this one was wrong.

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Mel said, I'm going through the doldrums of the ministry; I confess I'm a little disillusioned, he said. He told me it did him good to talk about it to someone his age, someone outside the situation, someone from the past.

When I was a kid and they built our new church in Alberta they made two rooms on either side of the platform. From one side the musicians filed in, the pianist and choir and director and song leader, and from the other side, the minister. He came out of the Pastor's Study. It said so on the door. Those two rooms were like the wings of our worship, the two broad parts of it, and when those doors opened, it lifted off.

I peeked into that Pastor's Study once. It wasn't large, but there were three doors leading out of it. I guess it was so the minister could get quickly to whatever part of his work he had to do next. Out of the building or into the sanctuary or down around to the classrooms and the basement and the bathroom.

As I recall it, the churches of that period were teak-colored and blue. I'm sure it wasn't real teak, but they had that awful orange and glowing look of teak, and the lines were in that spare, Danish style. And I'm sure the pews and chairs were always padded in blue, a bright blue, something that linked us to the Mediterranean Sea or the Sea of Galilee. Not that any of us had ever seen those waters, but on the maps we had in Sunday school they were a wonderful blue, cheerful, as if the sun lit them from below.

I was thinking about all this while Mel was talking. He was telling me about the tensions on the board, the criticism from the congregation, how he has to maneuver around them all. He opened up to me, but all I could feel was the room. I notice spaces and I knew immediately: this one was wrong. Far too big for one thing. There's no holy air in here, I was think-

ing, not in this too-ample, generic square, done up in cream, gray, pastel blue, and rose. Every part of the room was equally full of the same light. I couldn't distinguish anything properly. It was all clear, vivid, decently lit. Sherilyn beamed out of the brass 8½ x 11 frame behind him, and right beside her in smaller matching frames, Steven and Stephanie. Their faces conveyed where his priorities lay, I suppose, were intended to announce to all who entered that he's a family man, the husband of this one and the father of these particular two. When photographed for their church promotional brochure, he'll pose, I suppose, between the portraits and everyone will know.

Mel had two large bookshelves filled with books and neatly organized magazine boxes, labeled as to the title and years. It was a nice mix of magazines, I noticed—mostly Mennonite, plus two mainstream evangelical, one social justice stuff—probably what someone recommended at a pastors' seminar, or maybe just what his book and subscription allowance can afford. In the U between the shelves and a low counter hung a rather pretty seascape, the water turgid but hopeful in the long view. While I stared at it, wondering if I liked it, Mel told me he got the painting from that church in B.C. where he did his internship after seminary. It was painted by someone in the congregation, a fairly talented artist, he said, and it meant a lot to him because he knew him personally. It's nice, I managed lamely, is it the B.C. coast?

I imagine it is, he said.

His bulletin board was full of notices of upcoming seminars, and cartoons, mostly "Calvin and Hobbes." His computer was running during our entire conversation; the screen saver swirled geometric designs across the screen as we talked. One wall of the room was windows, but the venetians were turned up. (The room faces south and it probably gets too hot on his



I asked him,  
Where are your mottoes,  
your verses on the wall?  
He chuckled and I did, too.

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back.) His university diploma and his degree from the seminary hung on the third wall, as well as four enlarged photos inside clip-and-glass frames—scenes in the mountains that he must have taken himself because several of them had Sherilyn on them, or one of the kids. He's never gotten over B.C., even though he grew up here in Manitoba.

I asked him, Where are your mottoes, your verses on the wall? He chuckled and I did too. We laughed together, conspiratorially, iconoclastically, at the decorating style of our pious forebears and those snatches of truth, "Pray without ceasing" or even whole verses—"Trust in the Lord; In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall bring it to pass"—that they put on thin wood, embellished with flowers, and hung high and centered on their stark walls. Or embroidered onto quilts.

Then I was angry at myself because my question had been spontaneous and, for a moment, meant sincerely. Before it turned into that flicker of mutual disdain, my question had been true. After that I said, Nice, again, meaning the room, but that was a lie, too. The room is totally wrong, and I know now why he's fed up with the ministry. He sits there as if he's a professional, as if he deserved that calm coordination, those blended hues of serenity. As if he's come finally to the right place, a big study off the foyer, easily accessible to the people.

Oh God! They should do these rooms in stone, up winding stairs, with narrow windows where the light falls in for only part of the day. Perhaps a case—ment facing east in order to remember "where morning dawns," "where evening fades," the Lord's mercies brilliantly new for the opening, and a candle for the dim and waning hours of the afternoon. And just a table, something bare, austere, the icons of nothingness he has chosen—no photos, no seascapes,

no family on the shelf (forgetting the family), and it should be small, so the silence is thick, can be felt, compressed, held for the words that may moan inside it. The door should be wood, heavy, on large black hinges. Maybe a cross on the wall, or better yet, some symbol of the open tomb, a cleft, but nothing properly carved. It should be ripped or blown out, a wound, something deep so if he was feeling the way he felt today he could lean his head into it, and the edges would cut his cheeks, but his face would be comforted.

I'm crazy. No one builds churches like that. Not when we were young. Not now. Stone! But if Mel had gone to the quarries and selected every piece himself? There would be implications woven into the rocks which he might believe God had fingered ahead of time, knowing about his calling. The twists and turns of color inside the reticent mineral might speak as the seven stations do, might be words and lines for him like, "Not by might" or "Come" or "Mercy, Melvin, Mercy!"

It's your office, Mel, I said. He thought I was teasing and grinned comfortably. What about it? he asked. I said, it's rather too perfect, isn't it?

He took it as a compliment.

I know what I'd do if I couldn't get stone. I'd have it done in wood; dark, dark wood floor and walls and ceilings. Wood is what I imagine for the early Anabaptists. Dark wood. The veins of forest and cold ash evoked by those martyr pictures and the church houses, the folk with the suffering mouths and the ridiculous hats. The wooden room would have to be narrow. Narrow is the way. The desk would have to be narrow, long and narrow, without width, a Bible open to the left and, on the right, a piece of paper and a fountain pen.

I'd store the books elsewhere, in boxes or in some arrangement on shelves which I could hide under the



I can imagine Mel,  
listening to the old man with a kindly pastoral smile,  
the impatient strain of our generation  
tucked into the corner of it.

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floor. If a book was required—for a Greek or Hebrew meaning, for inspiration—I'd pull on the handle. It would open like an accordion, and I'd take out what I needed. The rest of the time the books would be out of sight and no one would know how many I had, which ones I collected or favored. Books are like wisdom, too precious to arrange for public view. They should be buried as treasure, with the only way in through fragments of maps or riddles.

I'd keep a sharpened carving knife handy to cut what I found into the wood of my walls, and by the time I was finished with the room, a blind person could read it. All the important texts would be there: "By this we know" and "In our hearts the love of God is shed abroad."

I listened to Mel for an hour or so. What could I say? All I suggested was that the room was wrong, but that was early in the conversation and he didn't take me seriously. Just as well. From what he revealed as he unwound, I can imagine what he'd be up against if he announced to his congregation, I'm sorry but my office will not do. I'm sorry, but it doesn't help me at all. They would throw up hands in unison and ask each other, what's with these pastors nowadays, nothing's good enough for them. And the old Reverend Klassen who's retired here from the country would warn in his old weak voice that he composed all his sermons in his head, while on his tractor, and at the end of a long day he sat down at the kitchen table and wrote them out exactly as he'd planned them. He'd stop, if he had to, in the field and check a passage in order to think on it correctly. He always had a Bible close to him, wrapped in a sack.

I can imagine Mel, listening to the old man with a kindly pastoral smile, the impatient strain of our generation tucked into the corners of it. And at the next meeting of the association of Winnipeg's MB

pastors, he'd tell the others over lunch, and they would all roll their eyes together . . .

Oh he'll manage, Mel will; he's got that quality. He'll get through the doldrums. I've taken some of his gloom upon myself, that's all. I merely picked up the lines of cynicism, the self-conscious helpfulness in the arrangement of his furniture. I'm sure that's all . . .

But Mel! I wish we were young again and on the farm, just for one week, and that I was as stubborn again as I once was, suppressing even my breath under the hay to outlast the others, to win. Me, you, the world, all of us young and green. The old Reverend believes he had it harder but it's simply not true. He had the soil like water, his plow turning up stones, the sun's progress etched on the sky, and then at home, the mottoes. When he wrote his sermons there was nothing else to look at but those simple words, nothing to disturb him. His wife closed the door behind her and she made the children be quiet until he was done.

*Dora Dueck, Winnipeg, Manitoba, is a short story writer and author of the novel, Under the Still Standing Sun.*



# FOUR SERIOUS MATTERS

## *Facing Latin American Mennonites*

by Luis Elier Rodríguez

*Editor's Note: We reprint this article in celebration of FQ's 20th Anniversary. It first appeared in the Winter 1988 issue of Festival Quarterly.*

In my judgment the Mennonite church in Latin America has four primary challenges. The first has to do with facing in a critical way the missionary work carried out in our continent. The second is contextualizing Anabaptism in today's Latin American reality. That is necessary in order that Anabaptism may continue to be viable in the congregations and other communities of faith. The third challenge refers to making peace, rather than simply hoping that fate may bring it about. The fourth has to do with the hope that is necessary and strengthening to the church on the way.

### **Rethinking Missions**

For the most part, the Mennonite church in Latin America has arisen from projects of missionary groups in the United States and Canada. It also has arisen from emigrations from Europe during the first half of this century. The majority of these



FQ/Dawn Ranck





FQ/Merle Good

persons were influenced by pietism and others by the strong evangelical influence in the United States. Now the new Latin American Mennonite leadership is questioning the type of mission that has developed and what the new focus should be for today.

One of the problems highlighted by foreign missiology is the fact that mission efforts in the past did not adequately identify the cultural reality of the settings where mission work was being done. Nor was sufficient adaptation made. This was certainly the case in regard to the national identities of Latin American peoples. On many occasions the transmission of faith was done through a white Christ and paternalism about the customs and cultural traits of Latin America. In other words, in the beginning, the missionaries did not contextualize mission. That caused a poor relationship between gospel and culture, and, as a result, a church identity that lacked national identity.

Now the new leadership that has arisen has the desire of making a mission and church life from its own Latin American context.

### **Anabaptism: An Option for the Poor**

Another task the Latin American churches face is to reinterpret Anabaptism with its radical implications for the Latin American setting. The Anabaptists of the 16th century refused loyalty to the feudal system that produced a society divided into socio-economic classes of feudal lords and peasants. The Latin American neo-Anabaptists want to oppose divisions between rich and poor and situations in which the poor suffer oppression and all its consequences.

The Anabaptist movement serves as an obvious model and inspiration for the Latin American Mennonite church. The Anabaptists refused to participate in the feudal government. They presented the

distribution of goods as an alternative to the feudal socio-economic structure and did not swear oaths or go to war. They did so as a protest against feudal culture. Their refusal to baptize infants was a rejection of the official church and its feudal interests that legitimized the exploitation of the peasants by the feudal lords. Like their 16th century forebears, Latin American Mennonites are beginning to proclaim that Jesus and the Bible help to reorient the disciple and the life of the Mennonite church toward an option for the poor.

This is an option for those people tormented by sorrow, those martyred by suffering—that is, those who are marginalized. It is an option for people that do not cry necessarily for their sins, but because of their condition as outsiders.

It is an option that the church faces in this place of dependency, underdevelopment, and poverty. It is an option that brings the church to declare that poverty is not innocent



or neutral, but that it is something fatal—destructive to life. The option for the poor should bring Mennonite believers to ethical and prophetic indignation, understanding that God does not want poverty because it is the fruit of great injustice that cries to heaven like the blood of Abel murdered by Cain (Genesis 4:10).

Poverty is not something accidental. Moreover, the existence of the poor does not result from something missing on the part of a people, an inferiority or a lack of education. It is historically caused, the result of the rich countries that survive through political, economic, and social structures that originate poverty.

Because of this, Latin American Anabaptists ask the Mennonites of the First World, What is the program of the Mennonite churches of the First World to be in solidarity with the poor?

## Peace: Well-Being and Just Relations

The third challenge that the Mennonite church in Latin America faces is to make peace. This is directly related to the option for the poor, for one cannot have peace

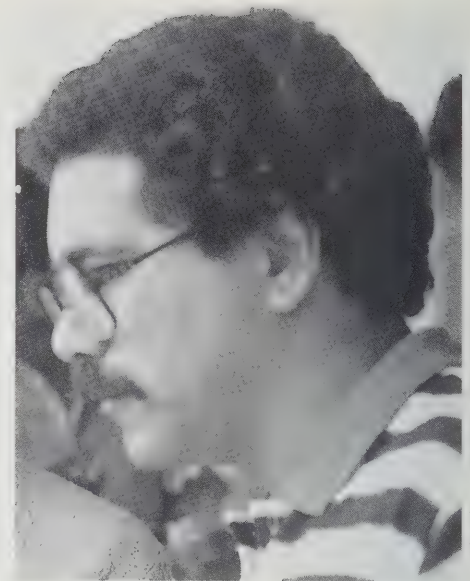
(well-being) if there is poverty. That is so because one makes peace to the extent that one seeks the common good and the establishment of right in the life of the poor majority.

The practice of peace in this continent translates into our determination to transform a social order that generates military dictators, death squads, foreign interventions, constant violation of civil rights, military armament, and institutionalized corruption. Because of all that, one does not speak of peace in heaven and glory on earth, but of peace on earth and glory in heaven.

The challenge consists in not making a peace of tranquility, passiveness, or absence of conflict, but a peace that has to do with just human relations, conducive to the well-being of persons. It is a peace that is willing to have enemies, but tries not to exclude those enemies from love and a life of peace. It is a way of learning and living peace in conflict.

## A Church of Hope and the Way

In spite of conflict, the Mennonite church wants to develop a



FQ/Merle Good

consciousness of being on the way, going in the direction of hope. The church accepts that it has not come to the goal, for there are still failures and occasions of unfaithfulness to Jesus. But on the other hand, there is no reason to despair, for Jesus Christ, the Bible, and Anabaptism encourage, exhort, and direct the church toward hope. This duality always has existed.

On occasion one observes groups of unfaithful Christians that have been instruments of death and in part responsible for the death of indigenous populations, for the oppression of a great number of blacks, and for the establishment of unjust social, political, and economic systems. But the church also has had the testimony of Christian groups that have been instruments of liberation.

Looking at the history of Latin America, one hopes that these liberating groups can listen to the Anabaptist cries characterized by faith in Jesus Christ, by a love for his Kingdom, and by a love for our continent.

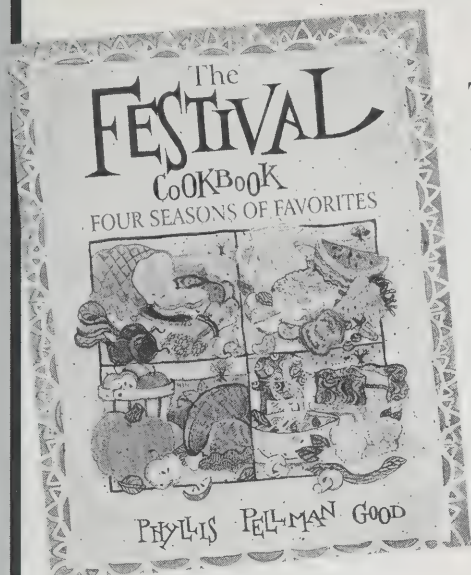
*Luis Elier Rodríguez (pictured above) is chaplain at the Mennonite Hospital in Aibonito, Puerto Rico. Translated from Spanish by David Graybill.*



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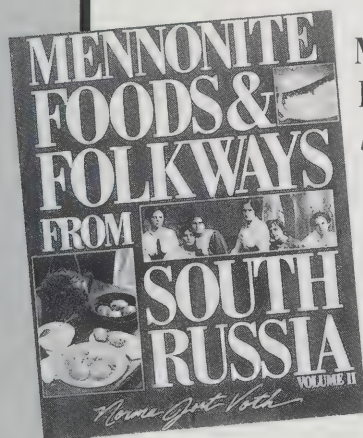
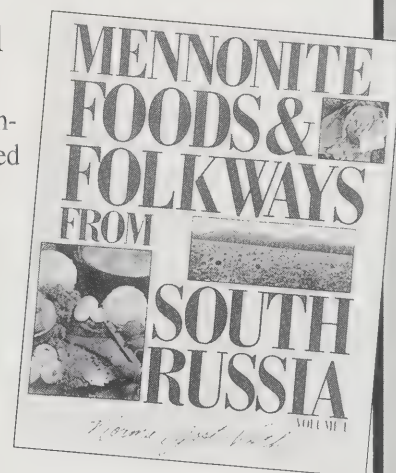
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## A Farm Woman's Artistic Lens

FQ/Kenneth Pellman



*Ruth Hershey's grandson, photographer Ed Huddle, talks about one of his grandmother's compositions during an exhibition at The People's Place Gallery.*

In her time, Ruth Hershey was a modest family woman, living and working on a farm near Paradise, Pennsylvania. Like many Mennonite women in the 1920s and '30s, her life centered around the daily needs of her family and home. An unusual aspect of Hershey's otherwise ordinary life was uncovered in the spring of 1993 when one of her grandsons, Ed Huddle, a Lancaster, Pennsylvania professional photographer, was invited to give a presentation about his work at The People's Place Gallery.

Huddle had received a box full of old negatives—photos taken by Ruth Hershey with a box camera—after his grandmother's death. In preparation for his lecture, he pulled out the nega-

tives and began looking through them. Of his grandmother's work, Huddle said, "She had something natural which was just dynamic." His excitement over the discovery of her carefully crafted photographic images caught the imagination of numerous people in the audience that early spring evening.

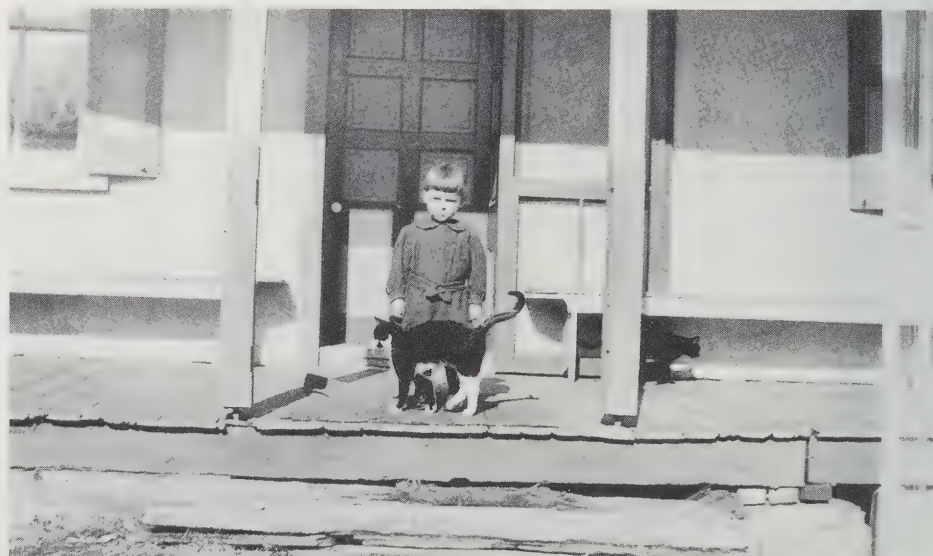
Phyllis Pellman Good began conversations with Ruth Hershey's six children, all of whom remembered their mother's box camera and her makeshift darkroom in a closet adja-

cent to their farm kitchen. In late 1993, Good collaborated with Huddle on the publication of a book of photographs—*A Mennonite Woman's Life*—which tells the story of Ruth Hershey's extraordinary life. Early in 1994, a reviewer writing for *The Washington Post* said of the book, "Recorded as it is by the intelligent lens of Ruth Hershey and the thoughtful descriptions of Phyllis Pellman Good, the book is a warm and lively portrait."

Then in September and October 1994, The People's Place Gallery invited Ed Huddle to mount an exhibition of his grandmother's photographs. "A Mennonite Woman's Life" offered for sale a collection of 32 images, reprinted as limited edition fine art photographs. The opening on September 16, 1994, was the Gallery's most successful opening ever. People as diverse as the president of a well known local school of art and various members of the Hershey family purchased the photographs. All of Ruth Hershey's six children, some with their own cameras in tow, attended the Gallery opening which celebrated their mother's work. Along with several of their spouses, they engaged the crowd in rousing renditions of the old-time gospel songs which they grew up singing with their parents.

The exhibition, "A Mennonite Woman's Life," will travel throughout the United States over the next several years. —LS

"She  
had something  
natural  
which  
was just  
dynamic."



Ruth Hershey



# Messiah College Launches Center for Brethren in Christ Studies

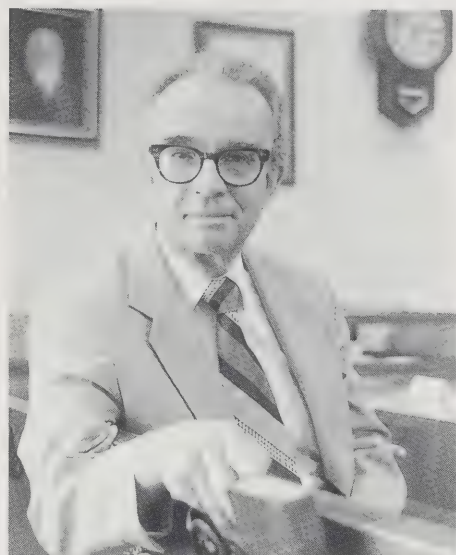
Messiah College, Grantham, Pennsylvania, along with the Brethren in Christ Church and its Historical Society, recently founded the Center for Brethren in Christ Studies. Promoting study of the history, culture, and current life of the Brethren in Christ Church, the Center also aspires to cultivate



understanding and relationships among those in the Anabaptist, Pietist, and Wesleyan traditions.

According to Messiah College President, Rodney Sawatsky, "The present and future are based on the past. A vital and dynamic church needs to know its story."

E. Morris Sider, professor of history and English literature, has been named as the Center's director. Sider also serves as the archivist of Messiah College. Located in the Murray Learning Resources Center of the College, the Center will plan occasional conferences related to Brethren in Christ life and understandings.



*E. Morris Sider, Center's director*

—LS

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Inviting people to invest their good retirement or pre-retirement years to a splendid and uncommon cause. This is also a kind of "Macedonian Call"—come over and help us; we'll engage you in your best creative working.

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We operate a craft store marketing goods for hundreds of artisans in a kind of self-help micro-enterprise, a restaurant connected to an historic stage coach stop, a village comprised of historic houses providing places for artisans to ply their weaving, quilting, pottery, wood working, stained glass, basket weaving . . . and a Peace Center in the historic Miller House. Many thousands of travellers pass through our campus and become involved in our unique and timely witness.

We also feature Early American festivals on location, and in Springs, PA, are restoring an historic school and the 1797 Stantons' Grist Mill, sponsor a summer music series, support publishing the *Casselman*

*Chronicle* and in numerous other ways attempt to become a meaningful presence in the warp and woof of the region. But we march to a different drummer and therefore need the help of Christian like-minded people.

We invite you to join us for extended periods of time: 4 months, 9 months, one, two or more years. We provide lodging, meals, some expense money and, in a few cases, depending on the term and the work, some remuneration. Motor homes are welcome; we'll provide the hook-up.

We can involve carpenters, clerks, computer specialists, researchers and story writers, supervisors, hosts for the restaurant and Peace Center, program coordinators, persons interested in promotions and tour guiding, village managers, grounds and maintenance, sales personnel, baking, cooking and food supervision, grant writing and restorations fund-raising . . . We'll even get you into things you thought you could never do! And encounter immense pleasure in it all.

**This may be the most uncommon cause you'll ever enjoy. Please contact me: Jack Dueck, c/o Penn Alps and Spruce Forest Artisan Village, Rt. 2, Box 5, Grantsville, MD. 21536, USA.**

**Phone 301-895-5985/Fax 301-895-5942.**



# Will There Be Any Toads in Heaven?

## by Keith Helmuth

We have a great fondness for toads on North Hill Farm, and they seem to have a great fondness for us—or at least for the environment we have helped create. There seems to be a direct correlation between garden development and toad population.

Toads, of course, are champion insect eaters and we value them as working members of the farm crew. I suppose they must value us as champion insect growers since gardening brings on great blooms of invertebrates as well as flowers and vegetables.

I am particularly concerned about monitoring our local toad population because, according to a variety of recent studies, toad and frog populations worldwide are crashing. Whole species have recently disappeared from relatively pristine environments. Their disappearance is an indication that yet another level of ecological collapse has been triggered. Once again I am driven to ask, "What in the world is going on here? Why is the economic behavior of those who control resources destroying the biosphere?"

More and more I conclude that the destruction of earth's integrity has little to do with the practical necessities of rational economics and everything to do with the deep psychic structures of western civilization which drive our collective behavior.

It has recently come to me that we need to conduct a kind of archeological dig into the Christian worldview in order to redeem it from a variety of ecological misunderstandings. In my effort to do this "spiritual" archeology, I have received particular assistance from the toads with whom we share the farm. Encountering them always seems to brighten my mood. Good humor often opens the door to an innovative thought. And so, for example, earlier this summer as I was weeding the herb garden, I worked my way around several toads. The question popped into my head, "Will there be any toads in heaven?"

Now I know the juxtaposition of such a down-to-earth creature with such a lofty concept may seem quite inappropriate, but please understand,

farmers and gardeners are vocationally vulnerable to this kind of imagination-tweaking mix.

Why does the thought of toads in heaven seem so incongruous? The answer is not hard to find. The idea of heaven, derived from the Bible and developed over many generations by orthodox theologians and preachers, is based entirely on the image of an *urban* environment—the heavenly city, the city of God. As far as I am aware, there are no rural or wilderness images of heaven in the Bible. The Isaiahian image of the peaceable kingdom on earth has generally been regarded as a temporary arrangement. The ultimate goal, the environment of heaven, has always been portrayed as a great and good city.

What is the heavenly city orientation? As a package of cultural values, it has a variety of notable features. Ultimate convenience and total leisure. No work, no struggle required. Total peace, joy, fulfillment, and contentment. No conflict, sadness, or suffering. No decline, illness, injury, decay, or death. All framed within an entirely urban environment. This concept of a heavenly city is exactly opposite to a working rural life and economy. It is about overcoming the meteorological, bio-physical, and social conditions of earth process.

The hold of this vision on the collective imagination of Christendom as it turned into western civilization did not wane. It simply moved from the ethereal to the concrete, from the sky to the earth, from the theologians and preachers to the political economists, engineers, and entrepreneurs. The whole modern project of economic development, both capitalist and socialist, has been driven by the utopian image of overcoming, through technology, the conditions of earth process and the establishment of human habitation in an environment which realizes as fully as possible the values and conditions of the heavenly city.

Is this a noble vision worthy of allegiance? Many intelligent persons over the past few centuries have thought so and worked hard to achieve it. Or is it

a recipe for ecological and social disaster? A dissenting minority has always voiced this warning. It seems to me, the issue is now perfectly clear. The technologies of high energy economic development are driven by an image of maximum convenience; an image which started with a theological warrant—the idea of the heavenly city—but which has now been translated into a license for bulldozing the ecosystem, undermining the value and dignity of labor, and offering shopping malls and theme parks in their place.

If this seems exaggerated, consider the meaning of the toxic haze which now overspreads vast continental regions and makes public respiratory health warnings almost as common as weather forecasts. We are talking about the breath of life. Cancer rates climb. Forest environments collapse. Lakes go dead. Toads vanish. However we conceive of it—as an urban rest home in the sky or the promised land of total convenience on earth—the answer to my question is still "no." There will be no toads in heaven.

Obviously, a great confusion has occurred. The attempt to establish the heavenly city of maximum convenience is wrecking the earth. Somehow we must pull this image—this "ghost in the machine"—out of the driver's seat and put ecological wisdom in its place. I'm not quite sure what should be done with the idea of the heavenly city. It is a powerful image. Perhaps the theologians could take it back and see if some suitable modification in its character can be effected.

Personally, I would not want to inhabit a heaven without toads and since a heaven of ultimate convenience and ease—wherever it is located—seems to rule out toads, I vote for a new image of heaven; one that includes trees and turtles, birds and insects, labor and rest and—yes—especially toads.



Keith and Ellen Helmuth have developed a small-scale diversified farm in New Brunswick, Canada. Keith writes out of "a background of ecological and social concern."



• Amsterdam University Press, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, has published *From Martyr to Muppy* by Alastair Hamilton, Sjouke Woolstra, and Piet Visser. *From Martyr to Muppy* explores how a group of hunted heretics—the Dutch Anabaptists—eventually became fully accepted Mennonite urban professionals. For the first time in English and from a multi-disciplinary view, the authors present their recent findings on the fascinating assimilation history of the Dutch Mennonites from 1530 to the early 20th century. Mennonite contributions to the rich history of Dutch culture, literature, ways of thinking, and church history are among the subjects considered.

• Knopf Canada has published a new novel by Rudy Wiebe. *A Discovery of Strangers* is based on the first Franklin expedition of the northern Canadian territory. The novel explores the Englishmen's encounter with the Yellowknife Indians.

• *A Dry Roof and a Cow: Dreams and Portraits of Our Neighbors* has been published by Mennonite Central Committee as part of its 1995 75th anniversary celebration. Charmayne Denlinger Brubaker, director of MCC's communication department, and Howard Zehr, an MCC photographer, worked together to gather the dreams and portraits of MCC's partners and neighbors worldwide. They hired seven photographers to record portraits of the people of MCC in places such as Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Florida, and Vietnam. The book of photographs and quotes will be available in bookstores and Selfhelp Crafts of the World shops.

• The Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario recently published a 45-page booklet, *Mennonites in Ontario*, by Marlene Epp. Epp, who is completing her doctoral work in Canadian history, includes numerous photographs in her analysis of the Mennonites of Ontario.

• Fran Osseo-Asare, State College, Pennsylvania, recently completed *A Good Soup Attracts Chairs*, an African cookbook for North American children. The book is a ten-year labor of love for Fran, her husband, Kwadwo, who is a native of Ghana, and their three children. Fran embarked on her cookbook project in 1985 with the dual hope of providing a bridge between North American and African children and helping her own children connect to their Ghanaian heritage. Each recipe was tested by children who had no previous background in African cooking. Published by Pelican Publishing.

• Reiman Publications of Wisconsin invited sixty-three Amish families from seventeen states and one Canadian province to write about their lives for the book, *A Day in the Life of the Amish*. The families, most of whom are also scribes for the national Amish newspaper, *The Budget*, described their activities from dawn to dusk on Monday, October 4, 1993. The coffee-table style book includes photographs of their homes, farms, and buggies.

• The writings of Howard Goeringer, Eberhard Arnold, Christoph F. Blumhardt, and others come together in a collection of meditations on Christian nonviolence. Edited by Emmy Barth, *He Is Our Peace* is published by The Plough Publishing House, Farmington, Pennsylvania.

• Goshen College announces the release of its centennial history book, *Culture for Service: A History of Goshen College, 1894-1994* by Susan Fisher Miller. Miller has written a history of Goshen College, unfolding its story against the backdrop of dramatic changes within the broader Mennonite Church, the evolution of American higher education,

and national and international affairs. Includes 24 pages of photographs, several appendices, and an index.

• *Barbara: Sarah's Legacy* by James D. Yoder is the sequel to Yoder's earlier historical novel, *Sarah of the Border Wars*. In this new title, Sarah's daughter, Barbara, watches World War I intrude on her peaceful Mennonite-Amish community. Published by Faith and Life Press.

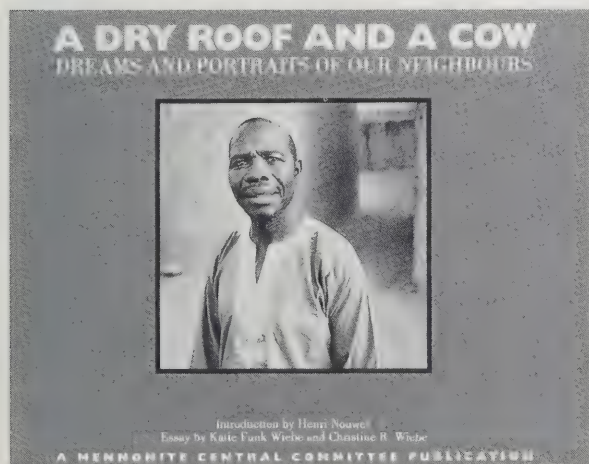
• Esther Bender's novel, *Katie and the Lemon Tree*, introduces elementary school-age children to a pioneer story in the mountain valleys near Grantsville, Maryland. The Miller family leave Germany for America in search of free land and religious freedom. Published by Herald Press.

• Carolyn Wenger and Hope Kauffman Lind have completed a manual for congregational historians. The booklet outlines duties and provides guidelines for persons in the local congregation who are responsible for collecting and preserving a congregation's records and stories. Published by the Historical Committee of the Mennonite Church.

• *In the Blink of an Eye* reflects on the changes experienced during the lifetime of the author, Gordon Hunsberger. A retired Ontario farmer and longtime newspaper columnist, Hunsberger addresses topics such as farming, family life, transportation, and religion. Self-published.

• Windflower Communications announces the publication of a first novel by H.M.R. Dueck. *An Orphan's Song* is based on Mennonite life in Russia and Canada.

• Byrdalene Horst, Mennonite Board of Missions worker in Argentina, recently completed a book of worship songs in the Toba language. Horst hopes the book, published in Argentina, will encourage the use of the indigenous languages in worship.





**Jonas and Sally**, a novel by Rich Foss. Good Books, 1994. 332 pages, \$19.95.

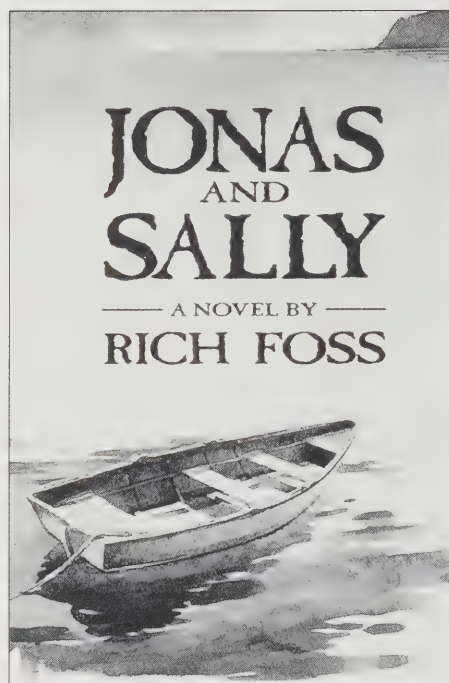
Reviewed by Sally Schreiner

Set in the 1930s around Lake Michigan, *Jonas and Sally* tells the story of a farmboy-turned-preacher who comes of age as he ministers to an island fishing community and falls in love with a single mother living there. Like its protagonist, the novel is disarmingly simple and direct with its short, crisp sentences, spare dialogue, fresh metaphors, and homespun characters dispensing folk wisdom.

In the first few pages we meet the island residents who will nurture Jonas in his pastoral vocation. There is Daniel, the tugboat captain and island patriarch, who tells Jonas, "Being a preacher will cost you plenty...Preachers, they have to love, you know, and you can't love without your heart getting broken a few times." Philena, Theresa, and Brawn, members of Daniel's fishing crew, give Jonas opportunity to demonstrate his "uncanny power to open hearts." Jackson, an alcoholic amputee, alternately goads Jonas with cynical barbs and confides to him his sources of heartbreak. And there is Sally, the tough young woman who challenges Jonas to speak a word from God that makes sense of her suffering. He gives her Jesus' prayer from the cross, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani."

When Sally discloses to Jonas that she was raped by her father, he must deal both with his outrage toward the father and with the negative consequences this act has inflicted on the woman he loves. As such, the novel becomes a kind of casebook for dealing with the effects of sexual abuse on survivors and their partners. Transformation comes as Sally finds the courage to face her perpetrator, and Jonas finds the will to approach his enemy with tough love rather than vengeance. He also learns how to "tack" against the wind of Sally's distrust to build trust and possibilities for honesty and intimacy.

I enjoyed the first half of the book more than the second, as rich characterization and pithy story-telling yield to plot developments playing themselves out. Jonas' unconventional



ministry fades into the background as his engagement and marriage to Sally claim major focus. I wish the author had developed Sally's character beyond her primary identity here as an incest survivor and Jonas' love interest. Nevertheless, as a first novel, Mennonite pastor Rich Foss has done us a service in presenting Jonas as a character whose struggles move us and whose spiritual insights challenge us to grow in the costly business of sacrificial loving. This is a timely and valuable story with its themes of sexual brokenness and healing from abuse.

*Sally Schreiner serves on the pastoral staff of Reba Place Church, a Mennonite and Brethren congregation in Evanston, Illinois.*

**FQ price—\$15.96**  
(Regular price—19.95)

**Going Places**, a play by Merle Good. Good. Good Books, 1994. 93 pages, \$6.95.

Reviewed by John A. Lapp

*We've always been against war—that's part of our faith. But this big Vietnam fuss is all politics.* (Act I, Scene 1)

*Oh, I don't know that we had anything you could call aspirations. We just wanted to farm—and to follow God.* (Act III, Scene 3)

These reflections by the matriarch of the story, Susan Zimmerman, summarize the social and religious transition of a somewhat typical Lancaster Mennonite farm family.

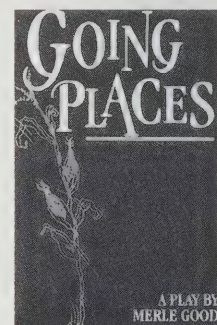
A healthy traditional society reflects strong familial and communal ties. Modernity—with its emphasis on the individual—undermines an established tradition. This simple but profound study illustrates the breakdown of one such society.

In 1969 the family future seems to be determined in the Zimmerman offsprings' responses to the Vietnam War. Oldest son Mervin ignores the war. Jake actively supports the anti-war movement. Franklin wants to join the military, but, succumbing to parental entreaties, goes into alternative service. Rhoda stays with the mainline Mennonite church and serves six years in Africa, eventually becoming a pastor. The third generation are young adults at the end of the play. As expected, they long for the wholeness and mutuality of a community now lost.

Others will have to judge the literary merit of *Going Places*. As one who has lived through these decades, I find the story quite authentic. But I wonder whether the characters are not too stereotypical and whether the "universal" motifs are powerful enough for Mennonites in other places, as well as non-Mennonite groups to "own" this story.

*John A. Lapp is Executive Secretary of Mennonite Central Committee, Akron, Pennsylvania.*

**FQ price—\$5.56**  
(Regular price—6.95)





**One-Sided Christianity?** Ronald J. Sider. Zondervan Publishing House and Harper San Francisco, 1993. 256 pages, \$12.99.

Reviewed by Ted Koontz

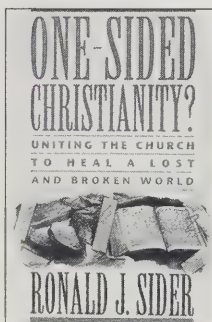
This book is Ron Sider's most thorough plea to date for an embodied Christian gospel, uniting social action and evangelism. Sider does not abandon, indeed he reaffirms, his personal calling to lead evangelical churches to more serious engagement with the social dimensions of the gospel. But he stresses equally the failure of many churches to take seriously the evangelistic task and expresses regret for not having taken it more seriously in his own life. A healed inner life and a transformed environment are necessary if persons trapped in destructive patterns are to experience Good News in its fullness.

In the first part of the book, Sider outlines four divergent models for understanding the gospel and the church's mission: individualistic evangelical, radical Anabaptist, dominant ecumenical, and secular Christian. After characterizing each and its shortcomings, he proceeds to present views of the kingdom, salvation, and mission which seek to hold together evangelism and social action. The final part of the book is Sider's positive statement of an alternative model which incorporates the essential concerns of the first three models he discusses.

Though I am more drawn toward the radical Anabaptist model than Sider is, and see its emphasis on living kingdom values in the community of faith as a way to unite personal and social transformation, I strongly agree with his call to overcome "one-sided Christianity." This book, if read seriously by Christians of various persuasions, could do much to overcome a pernicious split undermining the gospel's power to transform.

*Ted Koontz is Associate Professor of Ethics and Peace Studies at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Goshen, Indiana.*

**FQ price—\$10.40**  
(Regular price—12.99)



**Traces of Treasure,** Joanne Lehman. Herald Press, 1994. 158 pages, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Barbara Esch Shisler

Joanne Lehman's first book offers a deli-shop of essays and poems on life's flavors—traces of treasure. Her quest for God leads her to an elemental spirituality. "Hymns to Piety," "Stories of Self," and "Walking in Holiness" are categories further divided into nineteen sections which create a menu that includes many of the ingredients of life. This results in a book easily picked up and laid down for brief readings.

"Hymns to Piety," the opening section, begins with the celebration of the memory of a bishop grandfather's twinkle and his unique and genuine love for people which are more desirable than his antiques on the auction block. The section continues with themes Mennonite Christians like to gnaw on—stewardship, worship, and Sabbath. "Stories of Self" are essays describing with the immediacy of experience such episodes as a fearful car accident, learning to write, and an exploratory mammography. My favorite pieces are in section three, "Walking in Holiness." Friendship, marriage, and service to people in need are presented in warm, descriptive essays that encourage and stick to the ribs. Poetry throughout the book is like a garnish of flowers. I found it too ethereal to bite into.

Even though the book has too many divisions and sub-divisions with titles too large for their contents, I found here many traces of treasure, reflecting the author's spiritual devotion.

*Barbara Esch Shisler, Telford, Pennsylvania, is a poet and pastor in Franconia Mennonite Conference.*

**FQ price—\$6.36**  
(Regular price—7.95)



**Meditations for New Moms,** Sandra Drescher-Lehman. Good Books, 1994. 302 pages, \$7.95.

Reviewed by Laura Blosser Draper

Sandra Drescher-Lehman packs the pith of life's most awesome landmark moments into half a dozen or so sentences and I am captive. Yes, there it is! That is how it was—that priceless moment—she has said it!

*With her first breath, I lost mine. As she wiggled out of control into her new space, I froze in awe. Her screams pierced my anticipation, triggering my tears of relief. Her vulnerability and trust followed her into our world.*

I cannot stop turning these pages. Drescher-Lehman's words impact my senses and my emotions. I smell, taste, touch. I wince, grimace, laugh aloud. Tears blur the print before my eyes.

*Before I was out of the recovery room, I called my parents. Before I was able to stand alone, they were kissing my weary smile. Before I was back home, they were fixing my meals and bed. I am thirty-six years old and just as much their child as ever.*

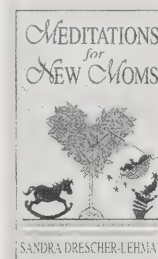
Each meditation includes an exercise for the reader to carry away. At times this was an intrusion for me. A less prominent graphic placement might have lessened its effect.

Drescher-Lehman concludes her reflections with verses of Scripture. Like glass prisms, they cast back light and perspective on her thoughts.

With a charming softcover design by Cheryl Benner, this little gem of a book contains about 300 brief readings. Three hundred good gifts toward the spiritual and emotional well-being of any mom, especially a new one. They have quickened my step as I try to walk through these challenging days with the Master of the Universe, who once came as a baby in the arms of a new mom.

*Laura Blosser Draper is fulltime mother of three and a private music instructor who lives with husband Steve and family in Winfield, Iowa.*

**FQ price—\$6.36**  
(Regular price—7.95)





**Amish Women: Lives and Stories,** Louise Stoltzfus. Good Books, 1994. 123 pages, \$14.95.

Reviewed by Lee Snyder

The lives of ten Amish women evoke another time and place, far from the frenzy and frazzle of modern life. These are ordinary women content to make a difference in small worlds.

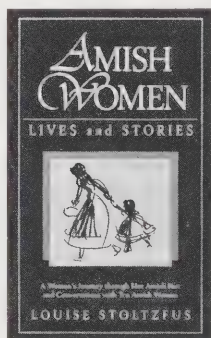
What is their secret? For the author, who was once Amish, these stories represent a longing for that which can never be reclaimed. For Naomi, Esther, Katie, and others, fullness of life comes within the Amish community with its prescriptive beliefs and amazing freedoms.

Against an idyllic backdrop, these women come alive. Susie, the watercolor artist. Adventurous Linda, single, who finds a way to travel to Europe. The career woman Rebecca, a medical assistant to a genetics researcher. It is church, home, and family, however, which give meaning to these lives. The exuberance of wedding rituals contrasts with the darker practice of shunning. Camaraderie around a quilt sometimes veils pain: "Talking seemed to help make the problems less imposing, less frightful."

The most fascinating story, however, is the one not told—the author-narrator's personal search. "I am glad once to have been Amish," she concludes. The irreconcilable divide between the simple life of these Amish women and the narrator who has chosen to join the "world" touches deeply the modern sensibility of regret and loss. Innocence can never be reclaimed. The real story is that of Louise Stoltzfus.

Lee Snyder is Vice President and Academic Dean of Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg, Virginia.

**FQ price—\$11.96**  
(Regular price—14.95)



**God's Call to Mission,** David W. Shenk. Herald Press, 1994. 229 pages, \$10.95.

Reviewed by James Pankratz

This is a fresh, insightful, and innovative book about mission—and that is surprising.

It's surprising because the book is structured as a guide to the Eastern Mennonite Mission (EMM) statement of mission commitments. Elaborations of organizational position statements rarely make captivating reading. But Shenk has managed to use the framework of the EMM statement to write a lively and compelling book.

There are five chapters exploring the biblical foundations of mission, two outlining some dominant features of our modern world, and five examining major current issues in mission. Many of the anthropological and methodological concepts which have become foundational to the study of mission are introduced and explored quite unobtrusively. The book is very anecdotal, full of conversations with strangers on airplanes, church leaders in African cities, students in Hong Kong, and congregations in the United States.

The strength of the book is also its limitation. Pungent anecdotes sometimes recount an objection to Christian faith or a dilemma of modern society, but the book sweeps on. There is much confident proclamation and perceptive insight and little cautious analysis.

This is one of the most enjoyable books about mission available for general reading. The conversational writing style, the study questions, and the supporting biblical texts make it an accessible resource for congregational study groups.

James Pankratz is President of Concord College, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

**FQ price—\$8.76**  
(Regular price—10.95)



**Wild Mother Dancing,** Di Brandt. University of Manitoba Press, 1993. 188 pages, \$17.95.

Reviewed by Philip Ruth

Soon after Di Brandt gave birth to her first child in 1976, it occurred to her that none of the texts she had recently studied on her way to a Master's in English literature had anything remotely to do with the experience of becoming a mother. "I became aware," she writes in the prologue to *Wild Mother Dancing*, "of how terribly absent, or at least invisible, mothers have been in the Western tradition, in narrative and social institutions."

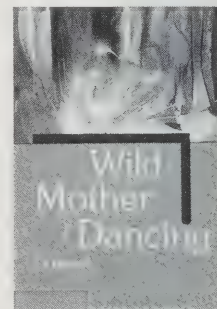
Brandt's investigation broadened over the course of the next decade, eventually becoming the subject of her Ph.D. dissertation. A revised version of that work, this book also retains a decided academic flavor. Its density of literary allusions will no doubt prove daunting to most non-scholars.

Drawing upon feminist theory, Brandt examines a handful of works produced by Canadian women whom she sees as having "escaped colonization" and done their writing "on the very margins of Western discourse." These include prairie writer Margaret Laurence, Malaysian-born West Coast resident Daphne Marlatt, Aboriginal-Quebecoise Jovette Marchessault, and Asian-Canadian writers Joy Kogawa of Toronto and Sky Kee of Vancouver.

Perhaps the portion which is most accessible to non-scholars and readers of Mennonite background is its final chapter, which explores oral childbirth stories recently told to Katharine Martens by seven Mennonite women of Manitoba. Brandt finds that these stories, like the fiction of writers cited earlier, "agree on the fact of the mother's oppression and silencing under patriarchy. All share in the political/artistic struggle to bring her back into story, and hence into public discourse."

Philip Ruth, Harleysville, Pennsylvania, is a writer specializing in historical subjects.

**FQ price—\$14.36**  
(Regular price—17.95)





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Amish Women: Lives and Stories ( <i>Stoltzfus</i> ), hard	14.95	11.96
God's Call to Mission ( <i>Shenk</i> ), paper	10.95	8.76
Wild Mother Dancing ( <i>Brandt</i> ), paper	17.95	14.36

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Growing Up Plain ( <i>Kurtz</i> ), hard—p.2	9.95	7.96
A Mennonite Woman's Life ( <i>Hershey &amp; Good</i> ), paper—p.2	11.95	9.56
The Secret of the Old Graveyard ( <i>Kimmel Wright</i> ), paper—p.4	5.95	4.76
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The Best of Mennonite Fellowship Meals ( <i>Good</i> ), paper—p.36	11.95	9.56
Jonas and Sally ( <i>Foss</i> ), hard—p.37	19.95	15.96

#### E. Other Noteworthy Books

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# Do Ends Justify Means?

by Peter J. Dyck

Where have all the Bible smugglers gone? There used to be so many of them. I opened files for the various Bible smuggling agencies but had to stop at 17 because the filing cabinet was full. Ah, those were the days when smuggling was popular, profitable, exciting, even dangerous—and divisive.

Then the wall came down, communism collapsed, and a big silence followed. Where are all the smugglers now? What are they doing? The silence is stifling. I almost miss their mail. Some of them were so clever, so innovative, so sure that they were God's right arm. I decided to open one of my old files.

Attached to the letter was a tiny plastic bag of cement. (It was real!) Why? To convince me a lot more cement was needed to build Bible bunkers. "These Bible bunkers must be built now or we will have no place to unload our Bibles at the border...Bible bunkers will be built in a forest near the Iron Curtain so that we can safely unload our Precious Bibles for the underground church."

Just in case that did not melt my cold heart, they also sent me a drawing of the Bible bunker, showing exactly where MY name would be engraved on the corner stone. Wow!

I did not respond so they wrote, "Act NOW, this gospel invasion will change the course of history. MULTITUDES will be swept into the fold of the Kingdom—because of YOU!"

I still did not respond. They sent more mail. A handkerchief blessed by the agency's director; a "golden" cross; a red felt heart to wear for 24 hours under my shirt over my heart; an Elijah poster on which I was to kneel with my wallet in one hand and the Bible in the other.

Since the collapse of communism, there has only been silence. When I could stand it no longer, I wrote to several of the agencies, asking for an update on their activities.

You guessed it. Most of the letters came back unopened and marked, "No longer at this address" or "Return to sender." Two of the agen-

cies had merged but were separated again because "they (the people in one agency) wanted to use some of the monies in ways that we could not agree with." One agency is engaged in "church planting, scripture/literature distribution, leadership training, and children's ministries."

When I sift through all these pages of letters and reports, I keep coming back to the ethics of smuggling. Few of these agencies were much troubled by that. Back in the days of the Cold War, Bible smuggling was a multi-million dollar business. I visited a number of the larger smuggling agencies, talked to staff and directors, read their reports, and attended their public meetings.

The fact is I agreed with their efforts in several significant ways: 1) all people should have free access to the Bible; 2) we don't accept as final a government's decision to forbid the sale and possession of Bibles; 3) a Christian must obey God more than men (Acts 5:29); 4) Christians must take risks for the Gospel; and 5) the Great Commission is binding for Christians. What bothers me is that lying and deceiving were simply accepted as inevitable parts of Bible smuggling.

Listen to Brother Andrew, "Under his (Christ's) command, we go by every possible means—partial truth, concealment of truth, interpretation, change and opposition, or any other form of strategy that will help us to get in there with the gospel" (*The Ethics of Smuggling*, p. 136).

When the end justifies the means, anything goes—partial truth, lies, even war. I have a problem reconciling that with the message and spirit of Jesus Christ.



*Peter J. Dyck has spent a rich life shuttling refugees to new homelands, overseeing relief programs, and telling wise and witty stories. He and his wife, Elfrieda, live in Akron, PA.*

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• The Mennonite Environmental Task Force will sponsor **"Creation Summit: Shaping an Anabaptist Theology for Living"** at Wonderland Camp and Conference Center, Camp Lake, Wisconsin, on February 24-26, 1995. Designed to open serious discussion among environmentally concerned persons from the Anabaptist/Mennonite family, the summit is a joint effort of the General Conference Mennonite Church and the Mennonite Church. Keynote speakers include **Theodore Hiebert**, professor of Old Testament at Harvard Divinity School, **Dorothy Jean Weaver**, associate professor of New Testament at Eastern Mennonite Seminary, **Walter Klaassen**, professor emeritus at Conrad Grebel College, and **David Kline**, an Amish farmer from Holmes County, Ohio. For more information, call 612-721-6697.

• Mennonites from the Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan have settled on a former Soviet airbase near Jüterbog in what was once known as East Germany. Two apartment houses where Soviet officers once lived were renovated for the first group of 130 Mennonite immigrants. Another thousand hope to join them soon. A German newspaper reported, "With other former Soviet military installations covering thousands of miles still awaiting new use, Mennonite settlers could possibly play a major role in the rebuilding of post-Cold War Brandenburg."

• During 1996 Mennonites in The Netherlands plan to celebrate the 500th anniversary of the birth of **Menno Simons**. Mennonite World Conference Europe editor **Rolf Kuitse** reports a variety of events which will mark the anniversary:

- an international essay contest, exploring the relevance of Menno's writings for today;
- expositions in Amsterdam and other cities;
- a symposium of representatives from Mennonite schools exploring how Mennonite traditions are transmitted through education;
- publications for congregations on the meaning and significance of Menno's teachings.

• **Leon Yost**, Jersey City, New Jersey, will open an exhibition of his color photographs at Noho Gallery, New York City on Saturday, January 14, 1995 (opening reception, 4-6 p.m.). **"Images from the Outback"** presents cibachrome photographs of prehistoric pictographs painted by Aboriginal artists in the Australian Outback. Yost, along with his wife Erma Martin Yost, spent several weeks in the Outback in the spring of 1993.



• Sometimes a small bookstore chain makes a big difference. During **Provident Bookstores'** 1994 Summer Reading Club, 1,744 children completed the six-week program, reading a total of 42,886 books. The joy of reading is the youngsters' greatest reward, but Provident supplemented that reward with a gift certificate of 25 cents per book, up to a total of \$5.00. Provident director **Jack Scott** noted, "We see the Summer Reading Club as a chance for children to build their reading skills. We hope to have created a little community of enthusiastic readers."

• **Edith Krause** exhibited a series of her drawings at the Vineyard Gallery in Langley, British Columbia, from September 10 to October 2, 1994. The series, called **"Remembering Who We Are,"** grew out of a conversation Krause had with her mother about the simple tenets of faith in everyday life. Krause explained, "There's such a rich history of Mennonites living simply and trying to live within the

biblical framework. Sometimes I think Mennonites forget that." She hopes those who see her pointillist-style pieces will be inspired to actively practice simplicity in spite of the post-modern world's extravagancies.

• **Honda of America and Bluffton College** will create an art collection and outdoor peace sculpture garden at the **Lion and the Lamb Peace Arts Center** at the College. The Center is dedicated to peace education for children. Honda will donate \$75,000 to the Center over a three-year period. During the first two years, works of art focusing on separate annual themes will be purchased. An outdoor peace sculpture garden will be created on campus during the third year.

• **Christy Risser**, a master of divinity student at **Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary**, Elkhart, Indiana, wrote a two-act play—*Evidence of Love*—for her senior integration paper. The project, usually a 20-page paper, is meant to integrate everything a student has learned in the three-year divinity program. *Evidence of Love* contemplates one weekend in the life of Meg Grant, a twentysomething single woman whose life is shattered because she feels unloved. Risser's play had its premiere performance at the school on October 15.

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# Embarrassing by David Augsburg

"I knew a Mennonite once," the Indian chaplain at the Christian Medical Hospital in Vellore, India, says to me. "He was really into nonviolence, pacifism, and all that, except when it came to practicing it."

I didn't remember his words as I came out of St. John's Church the next day. A beggar woman grabbed my sleeve. Her request in Tamil was unintelligible, but her outstretched hand was unmistakable. I deftly turned to my colleague and continued talking. She was lost in the crowd in seconds.

I had just finished an excellent lecture; obviously, I thought, since many people had told me so. Rich with stories, genuine with appropriate self-disclosure, my lecture had been on "Caring and the Art of Compassion." And the question and answer period had gone quite well. Then, by the door, a nurse stopped me with one more question. It was late, almost everyone had left, and dinner was waiting. "Excellent question," I said. "We could talk about that for an hour with great profit. But I'm exhausted, and they are expecting us for dinner at nine." Can't she see that I'm tired?

Cultural sensitivity is my thing. My books on cross-cultural work for counselors and mediators get enviable reviews. But its certainly understandable that everyone gets tired on occasion. Like yesterday. The waiter seated us, heard our request for a menu instead of the buffet, nodded, and disappeared. After ignoring us for twenty minutes, I thought of a way to subtly shame him when I asked again. Did he even get it? Then we took the buffet after all. The service improved markedly. Is this really India? No service when you need it, a cloud of waiters when you just want to eat.

The Allied Health Services and all their students—twenty-three different disciplines from physiotherapy to computer services—have asked me to talk to them about service. It goes well in spite of my bringing along an uninvited virus. But back in my room I'm counting the days left, the number of lectures still to be given, and reviewing my resentment that three more appointments have just been scheduled

without my approval. The doctor never gets sick around here, of course. So brace up even though this business of servanthood is highly over-rated.

"Listening is the first and primary language of love. It is in giving authentic attention that we offer caring," I say to the nursing students. Then we explore the meaning of empathy in counseling. The responses from people of so many different cultures from Nagaland to Tamil Nadu are incredible. I can hardly wait to replay it to my wife. But she's eager to share her morning experience in an Indian elementary school. I nod appreciatively while reviewing the most exciting story to get the quotes perfect. She'll just love it, if I can only tell it with all the wit of the Indian student, if I can picture it vividly and unforgettably. Oh...I've got it. I grin appreciatively to my photographic memory as the line comes back to me. I really can listen. What was that she just said?

The Japanese officer at Narita Airport looks up at the tired travelers, dry and dusty from India. "Is there a cold water fountain in the transit area?" Water. Cold. Clean. Endless. The dream of the westerner in India. The officer thrusts his hand, stiff-armed, in my face. "You wait," he commands. I walk off searching on my own. "How rude can he be?" I think of a sophisticated and satisfying way to be rude to him as I pass by his post on my way back, but his back is turned. Where is that fountain?

Oh yes, about that Mennonite who was so deeply into nonviolence except when it came to practicing it. What a shame. Embarrassing. What was his name? Never heard of it. English. Probably a convert. Bet he grew up a Baptist. But the chaplain has heard my lectures and seen my life for the past ten days. He's met a second Mennonite. Some of us take our faith seriously.



*David Augsburg has entered the Anabaptist missionary corps by becoming professor of pastoral care and counseling at Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena, CA.*

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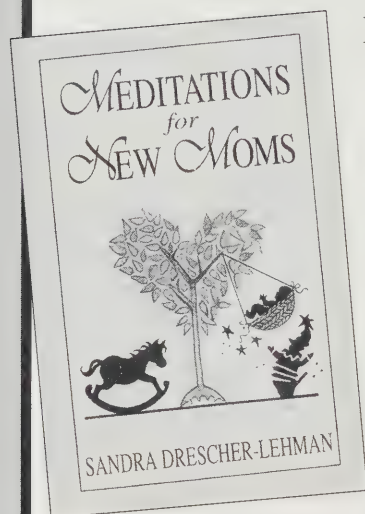
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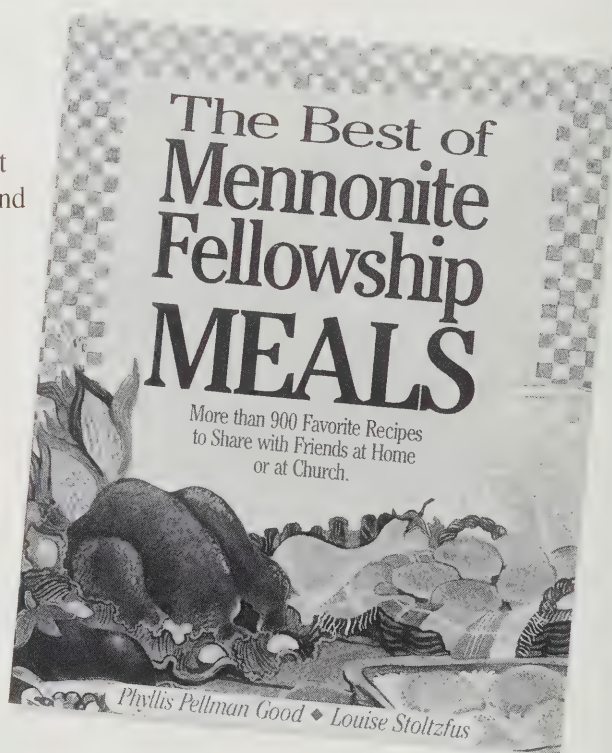
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**Barcelona**—An underdeveloped, fragmented yarn about two unfocused American men. Why Spanish women even pay attention is unclear. Wanders. (4)

**Bullets Over Broadway**—One of Woody Allen's best in recent years. Very funny; a bit slow. A hit man has thoughts about writing. (7)

**Ciao Professore!**—A tender portrait of a teacher who dignifies himself by dignifying slum kids. A gem. In Italian. (7)

**Clear and Present Danger**—An intelligent, classy thriller. Harrison Ford as the abandoned CIA agent. Three concentric wars, all about drugs. Predictable, yet fresh. (6)

**Corinna, Corinna**—Offbeat tale about an unconventional nanny helping a young girl deal with her mother's death. Endearing. (5)

**Eat Drink Man Woman**—The characterization of the food in this sensually pleasing Chinese film almost upstages the characterization of the people! A chef who's a widower tangles with his three grown daughters. A treat. (6)

**Fresh**—An intriguing study of an urban young man who decides to escape the violent knottedness of his life and start fresh. (7)

**A Good Man in Africa**—Well-meaning but boring portrait of an English diplomat in West Africa. Never comes together. (3)

**Hoop Dreams**—A classic documentary

which follows two boys and their families through the high school years as they dream of making it to the basketball pros. The three hours are definitely worth it. (7)

**Love Affair**—Elegantly mounted, superbly acted remake of the encounter between a playboy and an engaged woman, supposedly redeemed by love. Warren Beatty and Annette Bening are dazzling. (7)

**Natural Born Killers**—Be warned. Very violent. Oliver Stone's directing hasn't lost its manipulation. A study of gun-loving crazies and their incestuous relationship with the media (and Stone?). (4)

**The Next Karate Kid**—This packaged kid-vid adds to the tender series a girl who learns humility and discipline. (5)

**Only You**—A wonderful, soupy story about a delightfully romantic young woman who pursues her destiny the whole way to Italy. You'll either call it stupid or charming. (7)

**The Professional**—As taut thrillers go, this one offers both action, characterization, and warmth. Very fresh in many ways. A lonely hit man becomes surrogate parent to tough teenage girl. (7)

**Pulp Fiction**—Excessively violent. Viewer remains confused for most of the film. Three overlapping stories leapfrog through past and present in this portrait of gangster attitudes and behaviors. Very original film,

powerfully constructed—if the viewer can stomach it. (6)

**Quiz Show**—Classy failure. Attempt to use quiz show scandal of the '50s to analyze American culture. Wooden. (3)

**The River Wild**—A riveting yarn of white-water rafting. An innocent trip turns to fear and threat. (5)

**Road to Wellville**—A highly original film. Dr. Kellogg has many unique ideas about health. Offbeat. (5)

**Silent Fall**—Two psychiatrists battle over a young, withdrawn, silent boy who may have information the police think they need. Fairly involving. (6)

**The Specialist**—Manipulative exploitation vehicle. No concept of story. A dud. (1)

**Squanto: A Warrior's Tale**—Engaging story of the true-life Native American who negotiated peace between the first settlers and indigenous tribes. (6)

**Terminal Velocity**—A skydiver gets tricked into espionage. Mainly hard to believe. (2)

**The War**—A parable within a warmhearted tale. Children growing up with a father crippled by war. Parable lovers will enthuse; storylovers may snooze. (5)

*Films are rated from an adult FQ perspective on a scale from 1 through 9, based on their sensitivity, integrity, and technique.*

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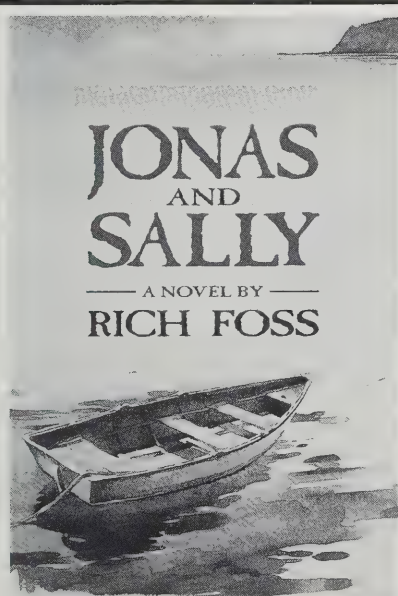
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—Sally Schreiner, *Festival Quarterly*

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# The Sign of the Mennonite

## by Katie Funk Wiebe

While the Festival of Praise, an all-faith, all-age touring choir, was at the Christian Music Artists Seminar at Estes Park, Colorado, the members stayed in rustic cabins with equally rustic accommodations. Kathy Middleton Raphael was having a shower in a stall with a see-through door in the communal women's shower facility when a woman in an adjoining stall commented, "I see you are a Mennonite."

Puzzled, Kathy, a non-ethnic Mennonite, wondered how in the world the woman could figure out her denominational affiliation since she was stark naked. Her confusion lasted only a few seconds. When she poured the shampoo onto her head and massaged it into her prayer covering, reality sank in.

— Kathy Middleton Raphael  
Pennsylvania

\* \* \*

One Sunday when Kathy Raphael and her husband were having dinner with friends, they discussed the fact that some Amish, like people of all faiths, have lifestyles inconsistent with their more sedate public image. Kathy mentioned an Amish family

whose daughters were known to frequent the Delaware beaches, immediately changing into bikini bathing suits. The husband, unfamiliar with Amish customs but eager to learn, promptly replied, "Oh, those must be the Beachy Amish."

— Kathy Middleton Raphael  
Pennsylvania

\* \* \*

A young boy heard his parents discussing relatives who had become charismatic Mennonites. "Aren't those the kind of Mennonites who say their prayers with their tongues?" he asked.

Better definition of a charismatic: Mennonites who take their hands out of their pockets.

\* \* \*

More Mennonite Lexicon definitions:

**Old Mennonite:** Anyone who can remember when a desk or chair were pieces of furniture and not a department and head of the department.

**New Mennonite:** Committee and board members who sprinkle the shibboleths of the times in their com-

ments with reckless abandon—"paradigm," "in the loop," "do-able," and "prayable." (Maybe soon even "prayable"?)

**Mennologue:** A conversation between two persons, each armed with an error-proof genealogy who discover they have an ancestor in common.

**Mennotholated:** The state of being impregnated with Mennonitism to the degree that the individual becomes so cooled down that all sensitivity to the poor and oppressed is lost.

**Mennologist:** A Mennonite researcher who, when an important non-Mennonite person enters a room full of Mennos, watches the Mennos.

**Menno Immune Deficiency Syndrome (MIDS):** A deadly disease resulting from a serious deficiency of contact over a long period of time with Spirit-led Mennonites who challenge and model the Anabaptist vision. The consequences are usually serious—legalism, high degree of institutionalization, emphasis on numbers of people attending and amount of money raised, self-serving programs.

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# Love Notes

## by Bill Walls

John McHugh is always telling me things. Dumb things. Things you would think I would know a thing or two about, seeing as how I wasn't born yesterday, but don't. Things I've learned and known, but can completely forget in a New York second. And things about which I still don't have a clue. Things like whom to trust and how to love and when to stand up for myself and when to bend over backward and whom to bend over backward for.

John McHugh lost his wife to cancer a few months back. Or rather, they lost their eight-year battle with that killer. Janet McHugh was a trouper, a fighter, and there were good days and good months, and good years even. But in the end the cancer won, and succeeded where all the fights and the moods, the stresses and sadnesses that happen in a lifetime of marriage could not.

After 36 years with Janet as the maypole, if you will, of his life—that connection point upon which, for better or worse, all else in life turned—John McHugh finds himself separate. Half what he was just a few months ago. Adrift. Disconnected. And deluged, with a thousand things she apparently handled around the home without his even being aware, things he must do now, order, clean, wash, pick up, drop off and buy . . . alone.

I stand talking to John McHugh now, stupider than I have ever been. I need to hear what he has to say, much more than he needs to talk. I need John McHugh to tell me things the way many younger men need older men to tell us things. How to live. How to live life. How to get through it. What to do in certain situations.

Simple things. Like how to hold a marriage together.

John was going through drawers in his house and came across a piece of paper. It was a page from his business letterhead pad, and in Janet's handwriting there was a listing of some fairly commendable qualities. It looked a little like a schoolgirl's day-

dream note about the boy across the way. All that was missing was a hand-drawn heart and the names *John and Janet*.

Except this note was written by a wife of 30-plus years, the mother of seven children. It was written by a woman who at the least had begun the battle for her life, and very probably was within years or months of the end.

“John,”  
I hear myself asking,  
“how do I know  
I would have  
what it takes  
to stand by my wife  
if she got sick?”

This is how Janet McHugh's list about her husband begins. “Loved. Cared. Worried.”

As quick with a joke as John is, apparently he didn't joke with his wife, not about cancer. He'd joke her out of moods, sure. He'd come home and she'd be in one of the moods cancer patients get lost in, and he'd have her in the car faster than you can say Dinardo's, her favorite restaurant. “Get in the car,” he'd say, without a smile, saving that for later. “I'm taking you out to dinner.”

But he worried, and she knew it. You don't hide things from someone who knows better.

“Helped me when I was sick,” is next on the list. Maybe Janet wrote her list when the cancer was in one of those horrible and wonderful remission periods, when all is as it was, almost, before the disease, before the

diagnosis, so what harm is there in hoping that it's behind you, maybe for good?

“Forgives me for a lot of things,” she wrote next. “Stood by me.”

And now, good advice to those of us who think giving constructive criticism is our religious calling. “Always complimentary.”

Janet McHugh next wrote about her husband that he “provided everything I would ever need. A beautiful home. A car.”

She turned the little page from the memo pad over then, and wrote, “Warmth. Humor. Kindness. Thoughtfulness.”

To show me this note, John had taken it out of his wallet. “Always there when I needed you,” she had written next, about the man with whom she had lived and been in love with for the majority of her life.

The last thing she wrote, the last trait that apparently came to her mind, was one to sum up all the others, and you can picture her adding it thoughtfully to the list. “Good friends,” she wrote.

I stand there beside John, as I said, stupider than ever, more silent than ever, unable to speak or to even pretend that I know what it feels like to lose someone so close to me, or so depended upon.

“John,” I hear myself asking, “how do you stick by someone through all the years, let alone the sickness, too? How do I know I would have what it takes to stand by my wife if she got sick?”

“You will,” he says. “If you love her enough, you will.”

See what I mean? Dumb stuff. Stupid stuff, that stupid young men like me need to hear.

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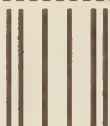
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Phyllis Pellman Good, Merle Good

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## ABOUT *FQ*—AND THE VIDEO GUIDE

*Festival Quarterly* finds energy and insight at the intersection of faith, life, and the arts. From our beginning, we have explored creative expression generated by Mennonite peoples. At the same time, we have brought our Mennonite grid to the arts produced by the larger world. The area we have reviewed most consistently has been film—because movies are so widely accessible and seen by so many of us.

As part of our twentieth anniversary celebration we offer all our reviews in one volume for handier use.

We invite you to continue—or become—a regular reader and subscriber to *Festival Quarterly*. We've always intended this endeavor to be a conversation!—PPG

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Merle Good enjoys cinema a great deal and has been reviewing general release films for more than 25 years. This *Video Guide* brings together for the first time his ratings and capsule reviews from his 20 years as film critic for *Festival Quarterly* magazine. His reviews and ratings continue to appear in each new issue of *FQ*.

"Some folks wonder why the list of films receiving a rating of 1, 2, or 3 isn't longer. There are several reasons. First of all, I can't see every film that's released, and if a film is getting universally bad reviews, I may pass it up in order to see one which I think will be of more interest to our readers. Also, at press time, it is not unusual that, because of limited space, I'll choose to drop several reviews of awful films rather than cut words from the better reviews. Consequently, readers may think I'm not tough enough in my ratings!"

Good was first involved in professional feature film production 20 years ago when the movie *Hazel's People* was filmed with Geraldine Page and Pat Hingle, based on Good's novel *Happy as the Grass Was Green*.

Good is a playwright, author, publisher, peoplehood interpreter, and a sometime film producer and screenwriter. He and Phyllis live in downtown Lancaster with their two daughters Kate and Rebecca. The Lancaster metropolitan area has more than 30 theatrical screens; additionally, foreign films are readily available in nearby Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., and New York City.



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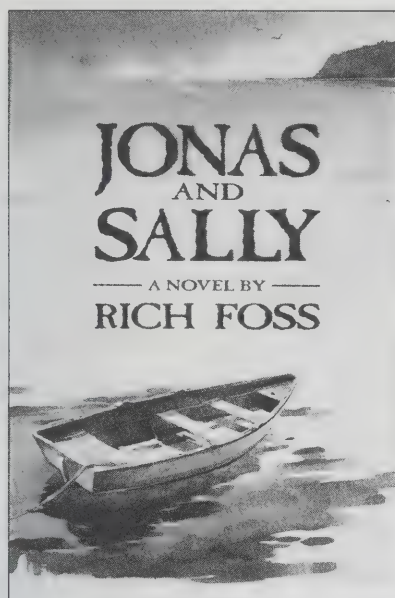


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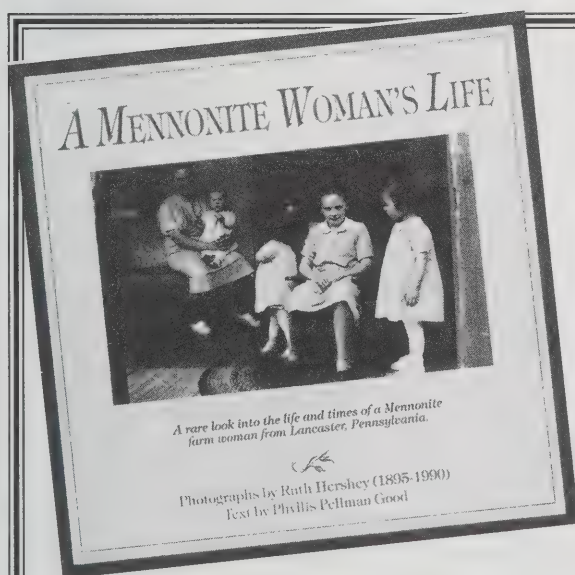
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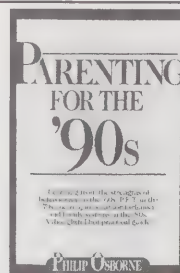
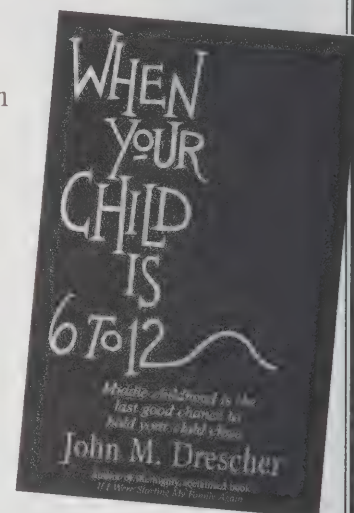
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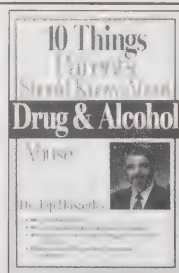
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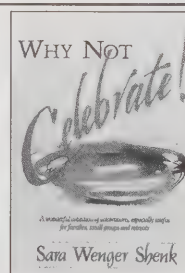
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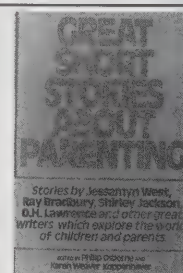
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# N I N E

**All the President's Men**—A brilliant film, demonstrating that real life is more tingling and complex than fiction. Crispy told, expertly edited, superbly acted. Stops before the end, so hopefully there's more coming!

**Amadeus**—A visually striking, thought-provoking film about Mozart and a contemporary superior of his who, in his jealousy, tries to blackmail God. More interesting than it sounds; as good a "Job-piece" as we've seen lately.

**Amarcord**—An outstanding film by one of the great masters of cinema, Federico Fellini. Set in a small Italian seacoast town in the early '30s, this film sparkles with the magical delight of childhood, telescoping moments into vivid perceptions of growing up. One of Fellini's best.

**The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz**—A deliciously provincial picture, specifically etched out of an intelligent Canadian soul. Starring Richard Dreyfuss as the enterprising Duddy who leaves no stone unturned in his pursuit of success. A totally engrossing story, rich with strong action and colorful characterizations.

**Being There**—An endearing tale of a mentally disabled man (played wonderfully by Peter Sellers) who is suddenly powerful in a media-drunk society. Very clever.

**The Best Intentions**—A powerful, poignant story about a penniless theology student who falls in love with an upper-class girl. An excellent movie based on a screenplay by Ingmar Bergman (don't let that scare you—this film is not all allegory and symbolism like some of Bergman's have been). Class struggles, theological conflicts, and romance! In Swedish.

**Breaker Morant**—Better than all the American Vietnam films together, this beautiful Australian film probes events of the Boer War in 1901. Great acting, superb writing, and unforgettable photography, this sensitive film stands as a work of art where so many have tried a sermon.

**Breaking Away**—A fine little film. Delightful, funny, sad, and growing up. Four townies try to figure out what to do after high school. It ends with a bicycle race against the college students, but it really unpeels the vital questions we all face.

**Broadway Danny Rose**—A masterpiece by Woody Allen about a small-time talent agent. Funny, bittersweet portrayal of a man who can't separate business from personal feelings. Stars Allen and Mia Farrow.

**Brubaker**—Robert Redford stars in this good-versus-evil near-masterpiece about a reform prison warden whose idealism conflicts with the pow-

ers that be. Redford is brilliant, as usual. Pits absolute idealism against compromised compassion.

**Cal**—One of the best pictures of the year. A vivid portrayal of a youth caught in the brutal terror of living in Northern Ireland. The murmur of the film broods over the landscape in unforgettable futility. Gentle, but unnerving.

**Chariots of Fire**—An unusual picture in many ways: brilliant acting and photography; ingenious use of sound and music; and theme-wise, this is that rare professional film which permits characters to take stands for their religious convictions without cutting them down. Highly recommended. A Protestant and a Jew each compete for the Olympics in 1924. Its flaw is its occasional slow pace, along with its emphasis on winning. But it celebrates triumph of the human spirit as few films have.

**The Chosen**—Highly recommended for all Mennonites who attend movies. Few films measure up to the book. But as a film in itself, *The Chosen* is marvelous. Two Jewish boys become friends at the close of World War II—one the son of an Hasidic rabbi, the other the son of an intellectual and Zionist. Two fathers and two sons struggling to preserve and translate the preciousness of the faith in life. Superb acting by Maximilian Schell, Rod Steiger, Robby Benson.

**Cinema Paradiso**—This Italian-language film deserved the Oscar it won for Best Foreign Film. A painterly poem of a boy growing up in a Sicilian town, enamored by the cinema, falling in love, and returning many years later. His friendship with the father-like projectionist is especially well portrayed. Sentimental at times, yet this



**Driving Miss Daisy**—For all the bad reputation attributed to Hollywood, it's gratifying to see an unlikely small picture by a topnotch director break into big box office, great reviews, and Oscar attention.

Miss Daisy is a no-nonsense, somewhat grouchy, wealthy widow of German-Jewish descent living in the Old South. When her son decides that she's not safe behind the wheel of her own car any longer, he hires a chauffeur for her, a simple but self-reliant man with a refined flourish. Miss Daisy is not pleased. The film unpeels the relationship of these two independent spirits, each knowing the brutality of being a minority, each getting older. And as we watch, the matron and the servant slowly evolve over the years into true friends. In spite of being a bit stilted and predictable, the movie is all charm. Don't miss it.



**Hannah and Her Sisters**—This is one of Woody Allen's finest films. From his poetic comic web of modern schizophrenia, Allen paints an impressionistic collection of intertwining short stories which emerges as masterful cinema.

There is a ripeness, a wholeness, a full dimension and scope to this movie which places it on any short list of classic American films.

Ensemble acting has been attempted in numerous films lately, most successfully, perhaps, in *The Big Chill*. It's a tricky approach to film, which has grown accustomed to two or three main characters in a simple plot. *Hannah and Her Sisters* is populated with numerous topnotch actors (Mia Farrow, Michael Caine, and Barbara Hershey, Max Von Sydow, Dianne Wiest, Carrie Fisher, Lloyd Nolan, Maureen O'Sullivan, Daniel Stern, Sam Waterston—and, of course, Woody Allen); but each contributes as a character as the camera circles, unpeeling, probing, waiting. The directing and the editing are absolutely superb.

The film unwraps a portrait of a modern New York family—three middle-aged sisters, their warring parents, and a whole ensemble of husbands and lovers. Hannah is the anchor of the family, the stable one. Her two younger sisters resent her, their lives unfocused and fragmented. Hannah's husband loves her but is attracted to her sister. An ordinary enough plot, though classic, with a title from Chekhov.

Enter former-husband Mickey, played by Allen, the snivelling New York Jew perfected by Allen, this time a hypochondriac of epic proportions. The strength of this film is that it is not a "Woody Allen" movie, in which Woody the actor is on the screen all the time, though most of his scenes do add great humor and pathos to the story. The weakness of the film comes when Woody the director can't quite fit Woody the actor (from his earlier pictures) into the sensitive impressionism of his most recent films; acting that borders on slapstick and veers close to breaking the glass of the complex mosaic of the larger film. But all in all, Woody the actor makes a valuable contribution.

Why is this such a triumph for Woody the director? The blend of the humorous and the dramatic is exquisitely woven. The writing of the scenes as short stories and permitting the point of view to range from one character to another is brilliant. But under it all is the brooding quest of a genuine artist, asking, "What is the truth of our lives, here, now? How shall we live, if at all?"

classic-to-be touches one as a poignant novel does.

**The Clockmaker**—One of the finest films you'll see in many a year. A brilliant first film by French filmmaker Bertrand Tavernier about an "insignificant" man whose son has murdered a fascist. We experience the father's growing awareness of himself, his son, his world. A sad but exhilarating story. Superb acting by Phillippe Moiret.

**Coal Miner's Daughter**—The Loretta Lynn story is a surprise. Sissy Spacek is excellent as the country music singer. The story maintains a tough balance, a down-home genuineness, a true-as-life feel. But it wallops a profound series of insights.

**The Color Purple**—A monumental achievement. Forget that it's based on a Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, and forget that Steven Spielberg directed it—and you see a film turgid with feel-

ings and images of a black woman's torturous yearnings at the turn of the century. A spiritual search in a brutal world.

**The Conversation**—A sizzling thriller of the highest caliber, unusually profound in these Watergate times. Gene Hackman delivers a haunting performance as the man whose business is bugging people for other people. Only for money. Until someone gets killed. Worth your time and money.

**Cries and Whispers**—Perhaps the most "perfect" motion picture ever made. Ingmar Bergman's best work beyond a doubt. Exposes the deep shades of individuality and relationship in a moving portrait of four women. Bergman uses color more intelligently than any living director. This is a sober film which shallow minds and weak stomachs should avoid.

**Dances With Wolves**—This special labor of love by actor Kevin Costner (he also directed and

co-produced) deserves special recognition. A Union soldier named John J. Dunbar, seeking the "last frontier" during the American Civil War, finds himself caught between two worlds in Sioux country in the Dakota territory. As he becomes assimilated into the tribe, many of his misconceptions are broken. A bit trite in reverse at times. Poignant and starkly beautiful, however, the film produces powerful moments of conflict and understanding.

**Das Boot (The Boat)**—A gripping film about a German sub during World War II. Full of suspense, surprise, and the fear of death. Strong acting; superb photography.

**The Deer Hunter**—A dazzling cinematic experience; one of the most profound films in years by an American, Michael Cimino. The story follows three young men from a poor Pennsylvania steel town to the jungles of Vietnam. But it's not a preachy cause picture; it's a scalding artistic look at life in America—and, really, the human situation. Devastating in its scope and depth. Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep are especially excellent.

**Do the Right Thing**—Perhaps the best film of recent years. By one of the most talented directors anywhere, Spike Lee. The entire film explores one block of Bedford-Stuyvesant during a 24-hour period. Classic and reckless simultaneously, tame and passionate, tiny and universal. The ensemble cast, including Lee as Mookie, the pizza delivery boy, creates a world of laughs and regrets, hatred and affection, purpose and despair. A thoughtful, daring black director dissects racism in this powerful, unsettling classic.

**Driving Miss Daisy**—Reviewed on page 8.

**E.T. The Extra Terrestrial**—Deserves to become a classic. Director Steven Spielberg captures the wonder of our human mystery. A small, intelligent but lovable creature from outer space takes refuge in the bedroom of a 10-year-old boy. The adults don't understand; it only makes sense to the child in all of us.

**Europa, Europa**—An outstanding film. A young Jewish boy survives the terror of Nazism by posing as a Nazi himself. Based on a true story. The marvel in the script and direction by Agnieszka Holland is the humor and humanness pitted against the terror and sadness. Superb acting. Riveting and unforgettable.

**Fantasia**—This 1940 Disney classic is worth seeing. An experiment in animation, classical music, and multiple stories.

**The Fugitive**—A classic chase picture. A physician, falsely accused of killing his wife, becomes the object of a massive manhunt. But it's more than a chase. Mystery, tension, and wit invigorate



the texture of this film. A duel of the hunter and the hunted.

**Gandhi**—An epic masterpiece about this century's great apostle of peace and nonviolence. Richard Attenborough's labor of love and Ben Kingsley's performance of the great leader fill

the screen with images and words which touch and inspire. Of special interest to Mennonites.

**The Great Train Robbery**—A slick, witty comedy-thriller about the first successful train robbery in England in the 19th century. Delicious dialogue, splendid camera work, and superb act-

ing by Sean Connery, Lesley-Anne Down, and Donald Sutherland.

**Godfather, Part II**—Francis Ford Coppola proves himself to be America's finest active filmmaker with a sequel that tops the original. Profound in its scope, inclusive in its understandings, lavish in detail, lush in photography, this film ranks with *Citizen Kane* among American masterpieces.

**The Godfather, Part III**—Another masterpiece by one of America's greatest directors. Again, this study of violence doubles as a study of the extended family. But even more, this film portrays, in a series of unforgettable scenes, the story of a corrupt man trying to get back on the right track. Al Pacino delivers a memorable performance as Michael Corleone, trying to reject the underworld, reaching out to his children and his former wife, suspicious of the church, and yet drawn to confession.

**Hamlet**—Superb. The great Shakespeare drama delivered with great intensity by Mel Gibson. Less bent on grandeur and intelligence; a more down-to-earth version. Refreshing.

**Hannah and Her Sisters**—Reviewed on page 9.

**Harry and Tonto**—A gem of a story about an old man whose world is collapsing all around him. Positively delightful and worthwhile. Tonto's the cat and Harry's her man. Some of the funniest and most poignant sequences in recent cinema. Refreshingly realistic in the end. Art Carney's superb.

**Hear My Song**—A gem. A funny, offbeat movie about a small-time Irish theater manager who tries to save his job by booking a legendary singer. An eccentric, delightful story.

**Heartland**—A film you'll never forget. A small simple story of a rancher in desolate Wyoming in the early part of this century and his housekeeper and her daughter. A triumph in characterization and mood. Superb acting.

**Heaven Can Wait**—An unusual mix of emotion and "suppose," highlighted by brilliant performances by Warren Beatty and Julie Christie. A very successful blend of story, grief, surprise, wild joy, and the moment of falling in love.

**Henry V**—A monumental achievement for 28-year-old Irish actor Kenneth Branagh (who also directed). Shakespeare's war drama comes alive with passion and shrewd power. Absolutely absorbing.

**Jean de Florette**—Reviewed at left.

**The Joy Luck Club**—A masterful portrayal of four women who left China behind, sketched against the currents of their daughters' lives in

**Jean de Florette**—In the hubbub of flabby formula movies, yarns of teen rebellion, and an exciting but somewhat shallow menu of character studies and tense action pictures, *Jean de Florette* has all the bearing and depth of a classic. And no wonder. The French film has the complex simplicity of powerful literature, a tale of good and evil etched in the souls of small people in a distant time. This reviewer highly recommends *Jean de Florette*.

Situated in southeastern France in the mid-1920s, the drama unfolds in a poor rural setting. A young man returns from military service, lives with his only living relative, a somewhat well-to-do uncle who's getting on in years. Family pride is highly valued there.

The young man, Ugolin, decides to grow flowers for a living. His first experiment goes well. But to grow a whole farm of carnations, he needs water, much water, and more water than he has.

When is the last time you saw a fine film about getting control of a well? The neighboring farm used to have a well. How to unplug it? How to buy the farm cheap? How to chase off the owners who would never sell if they knew?

Then a man from the city arrives who has inherited the converted farm. He knows nothing of the well. In fact, his need of water almost kills him and his family.

The acting by Gerard Depardieu, Yves Montand, and Daniel Auteuil energizes the struggle with all the moods and motives of the human soul. Claude Berri directs with a skillful hand (he also produced and co-wrote). The masterful screenplay is based on the first of two novels by Pagnol; a second film, *Manon of the Spring*, is based on the second novel.

One wonders why it is so seldom that such a richly literary but cinematic masterpiece reaches the screen.





The uncanny thing about Sydney Pollack's film, **Out of Africa**, lies in the stop-start of emotions. One is caught up by the restraint of the pace, racing on ahead to anticipate where Pollack is taking us, only to turn back and see he's gone another route.

**Out of Africa** is a story, first and last. There are many points the movie may have been forced to make, but Pollack refuses. And in the end, helped magnificently by David Watkin's inspired cinematography and superb performances by the three leads, the story is simply just that: a story of one Danish gentlewoman's experiences in Africa from 1913 to 1931. This reviewer applauds the director's discipline and triumph.

Meryl Streep demonstrates once again her incredible talent for becoming a character. She portrays Karen Blixen, a woman who has married a friend as a matter of convenience (she got his title; he got her money). Her husband neglects her, she learns to survive, takes charge of their coffee farm, contracts syphilis from her husband, goes home to Denmark very ill, later returns, divorces, develops a comradeship with some of the Africans, and falls into friendship with a free spirit played by Robert Redford.

Is this a story about the soul of Africa? No. Is this a story of a liberated woman in a difficult world? Not really. Is this a love story? Sorta.

So what is it? **Out of Africa** could have happened anywhere in the world. It's about the unpredictable menu life dishes up to many humans, partly out of control, pain mixed with the adventure, joy mixed with boredom. Large stupidities, small miracles. That's life. Richly spun, slowly told, colors sharp and mute, hesitant eyes, sad yet glad. One woman's life in another land.

America. Voluptuous to the eye; wrenching to the heart. A superb collection of lives interwoven into a cloth of sorrow and hope.

**Ju Dou**—A superb Chinese cinematic classic. Stunning photography and breathtaking color frame this tragedy/folktale, set in a small rural Chinese village in the '20s. An aging man buys his third wife, but when she doesn't produce a baby, things get complicated. Unforgettable.

**Juggernaut**—Seldom does an imitator exceed the original. But here's an example. If you're going to see a "disaster" picture, see *Juggernaut*. It makes *Poseidon Adventure* look like day-old dishwater. Richard Harris is back in his prime; Omar Sharif, too. The suspense and the clever timing never miss a beat. More exciting and insightful than it would seem. A surprise.

**Julia**—One of the finest films to reach the screen in many seasons. Jane Fonda's performance as Lillian Hellman (based on Hellman's autobiography) is brilliant. Vanessa Redgrave and Jason Robards are also superb in this poignant but suspenseful portrait of two friends who, after many years of separation, are reunited in a dangerous World War II mission. The story of friendship, courage, and self-understanding.

**Kramer vs. Kramer**—An excruciating confrontation between a husband and a wife over custody of their son. Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep lift this compassionate drama to superb status.

**The Lacemaker**—One of the best love stories in many a season. Two French worlds meet: a timid beauty parlor assistant and a university student. Totally involving in its simplicity. Sad, beautiful, and refreshing.

**Lacombe, Lucien**—This passionately dispassionate French masterpiece by Malle forms a major contribution to cinema. A brilliant study of innocence and evil, this unusual sociological gem ruthlessly details the empty feelinglessness of a peasant lad who, rejected by the Resistance, works for the Gestapo in occupied France. Malle understands the genius of the camera, and he shows us the subtle complexities of violence in a disrupted society. Be patient with this unpretentious classic, and you'll experience one of the best films ever. The photography's gorgeous; the acting's superb.

**Lawrence of Arabia**—The classic epic returns, restored and revived. Three-and-a-half hours of superb filmmaking. An Oxford classicist wanders into the Arabian desert in 1916 and stretches himself to a greatness few men achieve, only to discover in himself a corruption he despises. Splendid acting; magnificent cinematography.

**Le Fantome de la Liberte** (The Phantom of Liberty)—A positively delightful piece by another of the world's great filmmakers, Luis Bunuel. Full of satire and surprises, Bunuel focuses his lens on the unexpectedly silly conventions we all live by. Witty, sophisticated, and perceptive.

**Lies My Father Told Me**—A beautiful, poignant love story of a young child and his warm, wise (and a wee bit crazy) grandfather. A testament to the preciousness of memories; a story both innocent and wise.

**Melvin and Howard**—A delightful little film about the gas station owner who claimed a right to Howard Hughes' will. Rich with local color and humor. Surprisingly wonderful.

**Mississippi Masala**—An exuberant, exotic picture, ranging from Uganda to Mississippi. Young people from two families of color, one Indian and the other black, both feeling like outsiders and unsure of a homeland, fall into passionate love, against the wishes of their families. A marvelous story.

**Much Ado About Nothing**—An absolutely wonderful film. Kenneth Branagh's brilliant directing and acting delivers an exuberant, modern version of Shakespeare's lyrical tribute to true love. Very witty.

**My Left Foot**—A must see. Based on the true story of Irish painter Christy Brown who was born with cerebral palsy. Incredibly involving without self-conscious sentiment. Daniel Day Lewis as Christy is magnificent.

**Nashville**—Certain to be an American classic, this Robert Altman film about the country music capital transcends its immediate material and profoundly dissects the "frontier society" of America. Music is used brilliantly. Features a whole galaxy of unusual actors and actresses (Henry Gibson, Lily Tomlin, Ronny Blakley, Barbara Harris) in the ingeniously edited saga about capitalists, politics, and elusive freedoms.

**The Nest**—A strong unfolding of a tale, heightened by brilliant acting and overwhelming music. An old man finds new life and new death through his platonic love affair with a 13-year-old child-woman. In a small village. In Spanish.

**Of Mice and Men**—A must-see classic. This cinematic version of John Steinbeck's novel touches most human emotions. Set in a small California farming community during the Depression. Outstanding.

**The Official Story**—A remarkable film about an Argentinean schoolteacher who begins to suspect that her adopted daughter is the victim of the military regime. Superb writing and acting. Deeply moving.

**Out of Africa**—Reviewed above.

**The Player**—We'd nearly given up on Robert Altman who has directed some of the finest American movies ever made. Now here he comes with a clever, powerful, funny study of the mighty. The setting is Hollywood, and the open-



**Shadowlands**—This exquisite masterpiece succeeds in part because it does not try to do too much. C.S. Lewis was an Oxford don, a popular author of children's books and science fiction, a mystical theologian, and a boring, intellectual bachelor.

Enter an energetic, expressive, gently scolding American poet with her son. She has been touched by the incisiveness of Lewis' mind and writing; her brash warmth unlocks his dormant heart. And a wonderfully unconventional but genuine relationship is born.

Based on the true story of C.S. Lewis and Joy Gresham, this small but turgid film explores the exuberance and extreme pain of human love. Amazingly unpretentious for director Richard Attenborough, *Shadowlands* contains Anthony Hopkins' greatest performance (which is saying a lot after his many excellent roles in other films).

The triumph lies in the scale and the restraint, the absolutely dazzling script, and the brilliant acting by Hopkins and Debra Winger. Highly recommended.

ing sequence is worth the price of the ticket. Impressionistic yet precise, witty but sad, ambiguous but clear as truth itself. A marvelous texture and sense of movement. A must see for film lovers.

**A Prayer for the Dying**—A powerful drama. An IRA agent tries to end his participation in the violence. Against his better judgment, he makes a last deal with the mob. A priest tries to intervene.

**Ran**—A must for anyone interested in film and story. A Kurosawa masterpiece along the lines of *King Lear*, set in 16th-century Japan. The raging, aging warlord, the terrible beauty of battle, the wrath of seduction and power; stunning.

**Sandakan 8**—Deserves an Oscar. A poignant, searching story of a modern Japanese journalist's quest for the truth about young Japanese women sold into prostitution by their families in the pre-World War I era. Touching, Eastern-paced, and thoughtful.

**Schindler's List**—A masterpiece about a good-bad German during the Holocaust. Turgid black-and-white photography combines with crisp characterizations to illumine ambiguous morality in the hellpit of brutality. Only fault is flawed ending.

**The Secret Garden**—A masterpiece for all ages. A young, troubled, but spoiled, invalid receives love and discipline from his inventive cousin. Together they discover and explore the secret garden. Inspiring for all ages.

**Serpico**—Al Pacino is both daring and fantastic in the performance that should have been voted the Oscar. A small-time cop on the New York police force, caught in the tangle and demeaning impersonality of police corruption, who fears for his life because he tries to be honest. Based on a true story. If you see only one movie in this Watergate year, this is a must.

**Shadowlands**—Reviewed above.

**Sleepless in Seattle**—Some movies are rare treasures. This is one such. A charming comedy about romantic destiny. A man's wife dies, and his son keeps trying to find a new mother. Many unusual curves in this "will boy meet girl?" picture. What a delicious feast!

**Small Change**—If you only see one film a year, this is it. Especially recommended for parents of young children. This magnificent work from the hand of one of the world's greatest, French filmmaker Francois Truffaut, continues a tradition of classics. Delightful, funny, and thoughtful, but never mushy, this film studies the children of a small French community and the various adults who pass in and out of their world. Truffaut's politics have been known to be pro-child, but this is not a political picture; it is an endearing study of the world we all live in. "Kids are in a state of grace," one of the adults says.

**Somewhere in Time**—A wonderful combination love story/fantasy in which a young playwright travels back in time to meet a beautiful actress of another era. The story, the pace, and the acting sweep one into another world.

**Sophie's Choice**—A searingly superb film. Meryl Streep triumphs as the tormented Polish Catholic survivor of Auschwitz, trying to make her way in America after a life of grief and guilt. Too verbal and undramatic at times. But the impact is devastating.

**Stand and Deliver**—A marvel of filmmaking. Based on a true story. An inner-city teacher inspires ghetto youth. Immensely entertaining and touching.

**Straight Time**—A startling surprise of a film. Magnificent performances by Dustin Hoffman in a little story about an ex-con who tries to go straight. Gripping and grim. So much more powerful because it doesn't preach. Leaving prison is almost worse than prison itself.

**Swept Away by a Very Unusual Destiny in the Blue Sea of August**—One of the finest Italian films to reach our shores in some time. Superb photography, excellent pacing, brilliant acting, and subtle but striking unity. A servant gets stranded alone on an island with his boss, an outspoken woman. A basic and sensuous look at civilization and its premises. Only Europeans seem capable of making masterpiece works of art which deal with politics.

**Tender Mercies**—Robert Duvall shines in a small picture about a small, failed man—a country-and-western singer who's lost his soul. In the middle of nowhere in sunbaked Texas, a widow takes him in. Sensitive, understated, a marvel.

**Tootsie**—An intensely satisfying film experience. Brilliant writing, superb acting (Dustin Hoffman, Jessica Lange), and strong direction. A frustrated actor beats the odds by impersonating an actress, only to become a national star. Explores femininity in a new way. Very funny.

**A Trip to Bountiful**—A must for all FQ readers. Geraldine Page is magnificent as the old woman who wants to go home. Powerful, poignant portrait of reaching for roots, longing for love. Wonderful music.

**What's Eating Gilbert Grape?**—What a movie! A totally engaging, quirky study of a young man named Gilbert and his unusual family. Will he ever be free of his mentally handicapped brother or his embarrassingly obese mother? Does he want to be? What's life all about, anyhow? A rare treat.

**A Woman Under the Influence**—An embarrassing and painful movie to watch. Mabel Longhetti will engage you in her struggle to keep from succumbing to pressure—to be the perfect wife and super-mother. Bravo to actors Gena Rowlands and Peter Falk, and to John Cassavetes who conceived of it all.

**Working Girl**—A masterpiece of acting, writing, and directing. A spunky secretary fights and wins her way up the ladder. A funny, biting satire. Melanie Griffith shines.

**The Year of Living Dangerously**—One of the finest films in quite a while. A delicious, impressionistic story of strangers in a foreign land. An Australian journalist, in Indonesia during the military coup, meets a Chinese-Australian dwarf cameraman and a beautiful woman from the British Embassy. Unforgettable.

**Yol**—A muted Turkish film unlike most cinematic visions, strong and searing in its simplicity. You'll never forget it. Follows five men who are given a one-week leave from a Turkish prison.

# E I G H T

**Absence of Malice**—A hard look at the role of the press in American society. When a Mafia leader is killed, a frustrated investigator leaks a file to a newspaper reporter about the son of a mobster as a means of smoking out a lead. But it backfires. Paul Newman and Sally Field are tops as the written-about and the writer, but Wilford Brimley as the federal official steals the show. 5

**The Age of Innocence**—Set in aristocratic old New York of the 1870s, this elegantly restrained enchantment etches the tormented soul of a prominent man who marries the socially accepted woman, while his heart reaches out for her cousin, the beautiful (and unhappily married) countess from Europe. A passionate tragicomedy.

**All That Jazz**—A frenzied parable probing the non-depths of human life. Roy Scheider plays the workaholic film director who faces failure and death. Vivid, graphic, and troubling.

**All of Me**—Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin finally find a vehicle that fits their gifts. Wealthy, dying, eccentric woman contrives toward immortality by having her spirit "transferred" to the body of a young beautiful woman. But things go quite otherwise. Uneven, but very funny.

**American Flyers**—A two-pronged delight about bicycle racing through magnificent country, and two brothers who have much unsettled territory between them. As the story proceeds the

racing becomes the backdrop to the larger matter—how Marcus and David Sommers will accept each other's lives and, possibly, deaths. Tightly honed story line and acting.

**Annie Hall**—Woody Allen's comedy is full of sadness and wisdom, but remains hilariously funny. Allen plays Alvy Singer, a personality not unlike Allen himself. Diane Keaton performs opposite, her usual far-flung, zany, and delightfully funny naturalness. This film runs deep and leaves one thoughtful.

**Autumn Sonata**—Ingmar Bergman's best film in years. A deeply engrossing but storied look at the relationship between a mother and daughter. The successful concert pianist is played splendidly by Ingrid Bergman. Her daughter (a marvelous piece of work by Liv Ullmann) believes her life was ruined by her mother's neglect. Scalding, tender, and insightful.

**Apocalypse Now**—A flawed epic by one of America's greatest filmmakers. But Coppola shouldn't apologize. The images, the acting, the tone, and the pace are masterful—only the ending leaves us disappointed. A war epic based on *Heart of Darkness*. A young captain goes upriver to Cambodia to assassinate a crazed colonel. Graphic, but stirring. Martin Sheen excels.

**The Assault**—An outstanding Dutch film, set in various periods of Anton's life as he struggles to understand. During his childhood, a Nazi collaborator is killed in front of a neighbor's house. The neighbors quietly drag the body in front of Anton's house. Though uneven at places, a film you won't forget.

**Atlantic City**—Louis Malle's elegant, impressionistic film looks at "rebirth" (gambling) in a has-been America. Burt Lancaster and Susan Sarandon perform superbly. The film haunts and sears. A mite slow.

**Awakenings**—Very worthwhile. A bright but timid doctor in a Bronx hospital in 1969 discovers that an experimental drug can bring catatonic patients back to life after many years of immobility. Tragic and touching.

**Babette's Feast**—A masterpiece, of special interest to FQ readers. A study of culture and religion in a remote Danish fishing village. A somewhat mysterious French woman arrives and quietly serves two austere sisters. The culture shock runs both ways as she introduces art to those who consider the sensual sinful. In French and Danish.



**Cocoon**—In several ways, *Cocoon* is an amazing film. The story moves along with much anticipation. *Cocoon* has no clear-cut villain, unless it's death. Viewers feel drawn to character after character. The film is fresh, thoughtful, and as wonderful as a delicious French supper.

Creatures called Antareans from a distant world come back to pick up 20 comrades who were left behind 10,000 years ago, sustained in cocoons at the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico. They take human form, rent an estate next to a retirement home, and begin storing the recaptured cocoons in the swimming pool. Much of the delightful humor arises from the effects of the cocoons on three elderly men who sneak over to the estate for a swim.

Instead of using Spielberg's young kids, Ron Howard ventures into the questions facing the elderly: fear of pain, fear of death, wishes about eternal life. But it's not morbid; this delightful film is like a cocoon itself, warm, dreamy, and full of energy.



**Badlands**—Martin Sheen is brilliant in this glimpse of a killer's behavior. Emotionless, calm, and almost kind, he runs off with the girl he loves (a strong performance by Sissy Spacek). Violent, yet sensitive. The acting, editing, and cinematography rate as some of the best in recent pictures. A sad, helpless view of a sick mind.

**Barry Lyndon**—Here is the essence of film: strong visual images, music matched to what one sees. The movie works through impressions, not speeches nor a dramatic plot. Intriguing experience especially for the movie buff.

**Barton Fink**—The Coen brothers don't make ordinary films (*Blood Simple*, *Raising Arizona*,

etc.). This, too, is an extraordinary movie full of richly textured images, dark and cutting wit, and a swing on the pendulum of absurdity. A writer, fresh from a successful play in New York, goes to California to write a B-grade movie about wrestling. His seedy hotel, his writer's block, and the diet of falsehoods in Hollywood highlight the hell of creating something new and true.

**Beauty and the Beast**—A triumph of magic that lures and holds even the most suspicious viewer. Crystalline music and ingenious animation carry this ancient tale of what-you-see-is-not-necessarily-what-you-get.

**Benny and Joon**—A superb offbeat story about a creative young woman who suffers from mental illness, her devoted brother, and the whimsical stranger who shows up. Very funny, adroit, and winsome.

**Beverly Hills Cop**—Young Eddie Murphy sports his comic genius in this very funny romp of a tough-talking Detroit cop in the genteel Beverly Hills world. The film accomplishes what it sets out to do—with lots of help from the incredibly gifted Murphy.

**The Big Chill**—Excellent ensemble acting, strong directing, and deft scripting combine in this story of seven who were friends in the '60s, reunited by the suicide of an eighth member of their group. Captures lost hopes and broken lives well.

**The Black Stallion**—One of the most gorgeous and imaginative boy-and-horse stories ever filmed. Full of adventure and beauty. A classic film for both adults and children.

**Black Sunday**—If thrills and adventure are your bag, this film is for you. Superb acting, editing, pacing, and camera work highlight this tale of a terrorist Black September group who decide to blow up the Super Bowl game. Bruce Dern, Robert Shaw, and Marthe Keller star.

**Blue Velvet**—A stunning, uniquely original, dark, shocking thriller which audiences will either find sickening or brilliant. A disturbing, brutal lens on the life of an "innocent" town full of thugs and drugs. Only for serious filmgoers.

**The Bostonians**—Henry James' novel comes to the screen in elegant, colorful richness. Uncannily timely, this story of a wealthy feminist soon after the Civil War, her domination of her young follower Verena, and the young Southern lawyer who courts Verena unfolds with delicious poignancy. Vanessa Redgrave and Christopher Reeves star.

**Broadcast News**—A very funny critique of the atmosphere of broadcasting, complete with a romantic triangle in a witty, untraditional setting. Superb writing, directing, and acting. Very entertaining.

**The Brother from Another Planet**—A mysterious young black man suddenly appears in a Harlem neighborhood. His silence and his sad face draw people to him, either to confide in him or to get rid of him. What follows is a wittily sensitive portrayal of loss and hope.

**Cape Fear**—A Martin Scorsese classic, studying guilt and redemption in a disintegrating modern family who are stalked by a psychopathic ex-con. The violence may be a bit much for some.

**Field of Dreams**—Ray Kinsella, played by Kevin Costner, has moved from Brooklyn to Berkeley to his wife's home state of Iowa, where he and Annie are raising corn and their young daughter. One day while working in the field, Ray hears a voice that prompts him to plow under his crops and build a baseball diamond. By doing so, he believes he will bring back his father's hero, Shoeless Joe Jackson of the 1919 Chicago White Sox.

Based on a novel by Canadian writer J.P. Kinsella, *Field of Dreams* has received numerous comparisons to *Bull Durham* (which also starred Costner) and to *Major League*. Lumping these disparate films together as "baseball movies," however, is about as appropriate as drawing parallels between the Yankees of Ruth and Gehrig and the 1989 Atlanta Braves.

*Bull Durham* features lively characterizations, while *Major League's* strengths are its outrageous premise (the Cleveland Indians change from klutzes to contenders) and wonderfully filmed game sequences. *Field of Dreams*, by contrast, is a quiet fantasy that works on a variety of levels. Most obviously, it's a story about following one's hopes and intuitions. But it's also a tale of reconciliation and second chances, a portrait of a loving, supportive marriage, and a fable about finding one's purpose in life.

Full of understated wit, *Field of Dreams* both celebrates and pokes fun at the 1960's-style idealism of its characters. "What a Day for a Daydream" by the Lovin' Spoonful plays in the background as Ray tries to explain his first encounter with The Voice. "You're from the '60s," sneers Terence Mann, a reclusive novelist played by James Earl Jones, when Ray appears uninvited at his door.

Charming though it is, the vision created by screenwriter and director Phil Alden Robinson has its blind spots. Though Mann is black, all of the ballplayers the movie depicts are white. If the film can redeem Joe Jackson, who was part of a team that threw the World Series, why can't it include some of the great African-American players of his era—athletes who were good enough to play in the majors but were barred because of racism?

Also, a PTA meeting at which parents want to censor Mann's books comes across as forced, although it provides a showcase for Annie Kinsella, played by Amy Madigan.

Like a good young ball club, however, *Field of Dreams* overcomes its errors and occasional lapses in judgment. At the movie's heart is an innocence and wonder, a willingness to reach for what could be, rather than to settle for what is. While a few viewers may dismiss this attitude as quaint or sentimental, many others will find it as timely and inspirational as a game-winning home run.

**Chapter Two**—James Caan and Marsha Mason excel in this funny-but-poignant Neil Simon movie about a man whose wife has died. He tries to live on. He meets this woman. Searingly honest because it's Simon's own story, give or take.

**The China Syndrome**—A tense thriller about a TV newswoman (Jane Fonda) and her cameraman (Michael Douglas) uncovering a faulty nuclear plant. Jack Lemmon portrays the tormented control room chief. Excellently crafted.

**Chinatown**—In many ways, what one might call the perfect motion picture in the slick sense, and yet it lacks something. Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway fill this fast-paced story about a '30s private eye trying to untangle a conspiracy with delight and class. Ending seems implausible.

**Cocoon**—Reviewed on page 13.

**The Color of Money**—Brilliant script, acting, and directing. Paul Newman returns as Fast Eddie from *The Hustler*, trying to coach a cocky youngster at the pool table (Tom Cruise). Superb look at life.

**Coming Home**—A cause picture establishing an "I told you so" about Vietnam. Super performances by Jane Fonda, Jon Voight, and Bruce Dern. Proper Marine wife falls in love with a paraplegic. In spite of some melodrama and the stacked cards, it's a significant picture.

**The Competition**—A superb film about two pianists who compete and fall in love. Explores the rigors and temptations of performers. Seems a bit like life. Amy Irving and Richard Dreyfuss are excellent.

**Conrack**—A warm endearing picture based on the unusual experiences of a young white teacher among poor blacks on a "primitive" island offshore from the Carolinas. Jon Voight is brilliant. Excellent directing by Martin Ritt (*Sounder*). Sensitive. You'll like it.

**Cool Runnings**—A delightful, upbeat (and mostly fictional) saga about the Jamaican bobsled team in the 1988 Olympics. Witty play on prejudice and "swimming" upstream. Ending not as predictable as some. Fun for all ages.

**A Cry in the Dark**—A gripping story, based on a true account, of a Seventh Day Adventist couple in Australia whose baby appears to have been killed by a wild dog. Yet the mother is convicted of murdering her own child. Meryl Streep plays the sharp-tongued mother extremely well.

**Day for Night**—Francois Truffaut's Oscar-winning film (Best Foreign Film) is a delight to all film buffs. Film itself becomes the subject of this movie within a movie. Acting and directing are superb.

**Days of Thunder**—A wonderful picture about a man who builds race cars and the young man who drives them. Robert Duvall and Tom Cruise are brilliant and the story's powerful.

**Dead Poets Society**—Director Peter Weir creates another studio picture that looks like an independent one. Robin Williams shines as the captivating teacher at a rigid prep school in 1959. He instills in his students a passion for literature and life. Broad appeal for an unlikely subject. Superb acting and directing, yet lacks classical dimension.

**Dear Inspector**—Zippy, clever, and romantic French film about an oratorio singer who falls in love with a beautiful woman who turns out to be a detective. Great scripting, directing, and acting.

**Diner**—A marvelously well written and splendidly acted picture about growing up in Baltimore in 1959. Full of pop music, infantile pranks, and satiric wit, this story of several buddies facing life, learning about sex and marriage, and realizing the limits of their small lives is both touching and profound.

**Educating Rita**—A truly charming film by Willy Russell, based on his play about a disillusioned English professor and a working-class hairdresser who wants to become educated. Michael Caine is brilliant; probably his finest performance ever. So is Julie Walters as Rita. Deliciously poignant.

**The Elephant Man**—A film not to miss. Explores the themes of human dignity, physical ugliness, and the crowd's love/hate of the freak show. Has lost a great deal of the impact of the play about a deformed man, but still packs a wallop.

**Enemies, A Love Story**—A superb Paul Mazursky film, based on the 1973 novel by I.B. Singer. Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, alive in New York, find freedom and life in lustful sensuality. Herman finds himself caught between three women, perplexed and lonely.

**A Few Good Men**—A masterful drama, sporting excellent writing, superb direction, and top-drawer acting. A military trial investigates the death of a Marine. Jack Nicholson is brilliant.

**Field of Dreams**—Reviewed on page 14.

**A Fish Called Wanda**—A delicious, wacky comedy. An unlikely gang of thieves pull off a \$20 million jewel heist.

**The Fisher King**—A sometimes brilliant, sometimes murky, film. A loosely modern update on the search for the Holy Grail by the wounded. Wacky and surreal, yet a bit like life. An abrasive radio talk-show host crashes; he wallows into a derelict (played wonderfully by Robin Williams)

who is both deluded and wise, and together they seek healing.

**Foul Play**—A tense thriller comedy about a cop (Chevy Chase) protecting a young librarian (Goldie Hawn) in a crazy story about a plot to assassinate the Pope. Deft, skillful, and dazzling in its humor and pace.

**The French Detective**—A clever thriller with a unique ending, this French tale of a dedicated policeman who is accused of corruption weaves and swerves with perfectly entertaining suspense. Pure delight.

**The French Lieutenant's Woman**—A visual masterpiece about a Victorian gentleman who falls in love with a beautiful, eccentric woman. Meryl Streep is stunning. This poignant, engaging story is hurt only by the play within a play attempt.

**The Freshman**—A delightfully exquisite comedy starring Marlon Brando and Matthew Broderick. A film student arrives at NYU, only to be overtaken by events and drawn deeper and deeper into a net of intrigue.

**Fried Green Tomatoes**—Storytelling triumphs over clumsy structure. Superb acting energizes this sensitive picture about two women's lives; one long ago, one contemporary. Thoughtful.

**The Front**—An interesting piece about artists, actors, and writers who were caught in the McCarthy era by blacklisting. Achieves a great deal by focusing on one man, rather than the whole entertainment industry. Woody Allen stars in a non-Woody-Allen piece and walks off with the prize.

**The Front Page**—This third film version (directed by Billy Wilder) of the 1928 Hecht-MacArthur play about the roaring editor of the sensational *Chicago Examiner* and his maverick star reporter features Oscar-level performances by Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon. Witty, well crafted, and entertaining.

**Give 'Em Hell, Harry**—The one-man show based on Harry Truman's life. A small miracle with a filmed stage version of a two-hour monologue! It works, much to the credit of James Whitmore's dynamic portrayal.

**Gettysburg**—An epic whose glue goes a bit soft in the end. A grand-scale depiction of those three terrible days in the Civil War when so many thousands died. The characters portray both sides of the anguish. The writing is imaginative; the cinematography especially good during the first two days. Sadly, the last part sags as death becomes a cliché. All in all, a rewarding, sobering experience.



**The Gods Must Be Crazy**—A splendidly refreshing film set in Africa, exploring what it means to be civilized. Slapstick at times, but charming and hilarious throughout. Mennonites with overseas experience will love it.

**The Goodbye Girl**—Funny and tender. Richard Dreyfuss is marvelous as the actor who subleases the same apartment ex-dancer Marsha Mason refuses to give up. Even Simon-detractors will enjoy it if no one tells them it's probably Neil's best.

**Green Card**—An unlikely winner. Excellent performances spark this delicious story of a prudish do-gooder and an exuberant waiter who conspire in a mutually beneficial deception—and get much more.

**Head Over Heels**—An absolutely scrumptious love story, delightfully told, superbly acted, and brilliantly directed. Intelligent, witty, and romantic. Two average people in Utah fall in love. He's an unenthused bureaucrat; she's reassessing her marriage. Low-key and warm.

**Hedde**—A teeth-and-nails performance by Glenda Jackson in a triangle love story based on Ibsen's play. Questions of truth and power lie just below its cynical surface.

**Hero**—Dustin Hoffman delivers another meticulously etched characterization. An airplane crash offers a redemptive moment in the life of a failed crook. Someone else takes the credit. Delightful story about redemption and manipulation.

**High Anxiety**—Mel Brooks at his outrageous, crazy best in a spoof of Hitchcock. If you like Mel, you'll roll in the aisles. If you don't, stay away. Funny, irreverent, and occasionally profound.

**Home Alone**—A refreshing movie which deserves to be a hit. An eight-year-old boy has to cope with many challenges, including burglars, when his family accidentally leaves him behind for Christmas vacation. Avoids both cynicism and syrup.

**The Home and the World**—A wonderful unpeeling of the essence of leadership, set in India. A wise husband risks exposing his wife to the world and chooses an unpopular political position in the bargain. Richly told.

**Honeysuckle Rose**—An old-fashioned tale (similar to *Coal Miner's Daughter*) about a singer, his love of the road, his humiliation. But it ends well. Willie Nelson is magnificent.

**Howards End**—An extraordinary film, wistful for an England fast disappearing, ripe with free thinking and revolution. The rich, mysterious manner in which the story is told creates a magnificent perspective. A somewhat limited millionaire loses his reflective wife and marries one of two sisters who enjoy ideas.

**The In-Laws**—Peter Falk and Alan Arkin are at their best in this well paced playful thriller. The heist twists and turns right down to the end.

**Into the West**—An enchanting dream-like cinema-story about two boys who ride a special horse into the west in native Ireland. Rescued from the squalidness of settled life, the boys follow the mythical horse-friend back to open spaces, freedom, and heartfelt belief. A fairy tale with emotional wallop.

**JFK**—An outstanding piece of work by America's leading manipulative filmmaker, Oliver Stone. Stone highlights the apparent inconsistencies of the investigation of President Kennedy's assassination. Stone may not convince the viewer of his point of view, but most viewers will leave the theater unsettled. A riveting piece of cinema.



**Mississippi Burning**—This film opens with stirring gospel music and a chilling nighttime ambush scene. It never loses its dramatic stride and passionate voice as it marches through a fictionalized version of a terrible chapter of America's history. The images are raw, full of anger and outrage.

It would take a hard heart to not be moved by this story of hatred and violence, white against black in the Mississippi of 1964. Three civil-rights workers have been murdered and the two FBI agents leading their case disagree about the best approach to take.

A storyteller who tries to tell such an inflammatory story, based on some true facts and a bushel of assumptions, risks a lot of misunderstanding. Alan Parker delivers a vivid, fiercely passionate version in *Mississippi Burning*. He chose to hang the story on the two agents, one a Kennedy liberal from up North, and the second a former small-town Mississippi sheriff (played superbly by Gene Hackman).

The strength of this approach is to illuminate white attitudes and to dissect racism as a raw evil. This perhaps will shock contemporary white America more than another approach.

On the other hand, Parker has been criticized for taking too much artistic liberty in fictionalizing the role of whites at the expense of blacks. Historians claim the FBI was not nearly so aggressive in seeking justice as the film suggests; other critics decry the near absence of black characters who risked their lives in the inferno of 1964.

All in all, however, one rejoices at the appearance of such a moving film. Despite its flaws, it will touch millions. And above all, it's an excellent film.



**The Killing Fields**—A riveting experience. The friendship of an American reporter and his Cambodian assistant, etched and stretched across Cambodia's nightmare. Ngor is superb, as is Waterston. Full of pain and eloquence.

**The Last of the Mohicans**—What was it like to be there in the French and Indian War, caught between the French and the British, caught between roving Indian war parties? Few movies have ever captured the exhilaration and confusion of war so well. This film does not navel-gaze or write sonnets; it's about survival when the world's a blur. Thoroughly enjoyable.

**Les Violons Du Bal**—An excellent thriller about a filmmaker recapturing his Jewish childhood in occupied France.

**Local Hero**—A delightful, whimsical, sensitive film set in a small Scottish village. Representatives of a large American oil company try to buy the place. Man against nature.

**The Long Riders**—A gorgeously filmed poetic look at the Jesse James gang. Lots of shooting and blood dreamily fill the screen of this opulent vision of the gangsters as misunderstood, unsung heroes. Wonderful acting. The mood pervades. Superior western epic.

**Madame Sousatzka**—What a picture! A powerful character study of an eccentric piano teacher who demands 120% from her students. A bit heavy-handed, but Shirley MacLaine is unforgettable.

**The Magic Flute**—Lyrical and enchanting, the camera work here definitely enhances Mozart's music. A filmed opera sounds like a risk, but Bergman scores for kids and adults.

**Man on the Roof**—For pure craft of storytelling and all the essential elements of filmmaking, this Swedish film ranks as one of the year's most clever, most intense. It tells the story of a sharpshooter bent on revenge on society, especially the police. Not for children.

**The Man Who Would Be King**—It's all there—adventure, the mystery of why men must conquer, clever dialogue, engaging characters, beauty, a look at excess. Well done Kipling, Huston, Connery, Caine, and Plummer!

**Manon of the Spring**—This masterful sequel to *Jean de Florette* delivers a superb ending to the tale of love and revenge. Manon is now 18, and her passion to avenge her father against the neighbors who stole the farm simmers under that ravishing face. The complex simplicity is powerful.

**Marathon Man**—One of the slickest thrillers to hit the pavement in quite a while, this complex story is about an innocent Jewish student in New York, having a shot at revenge in the midst of a Nazi smuggling ring. Sports top-notch acting by Dustin Hoffman and others, along with the opportunity to watch the greatest living actor in the English-speaking world, Laurence Olivier. Some may find it too brutal. The photography and editing are super, though they jump over gaps in the story occasionally.

**Mask**—Superb story with an offbeat voice and a tender heart. Cher is tops as the free-

dom-seeking but loving mother of a wonderful son who has a grotesque face. Not your normal tearjerker.

**Mass Appeal**—An outstanding picture for persons interested in Christian ministry. Not profound, but funny, insightful, and wistful. A young seminarian clashes with the suave diplomacy of an older priest.

**Meeting Venus**—Backstage at the opera. Full of music, nuance, romance, and comedy. A delicious, sensual story about the Swedish diva and the Hungarian maestro and the dozens of quarrelsome backstage cast, instrumentalists, and crew. A treat.

**Men Don't Leave**—A gem. Jessica Lange plays a young widow who tries to cope by moving to the city to find work. She tries to raise her kids, she faces hardship and confusion, and she attracts eccentric rescuers. Tender and funny.

**Mermaids**—A poignant, wacky portrait of a mother who's more of a tramp than a mother, her teenage daughter who's preoccupied with saint-hood (and a nice boy), her younger daughter who wants to swim in the Olympics, and an offbeat shoe salesman who takes a liking to them. Superb.

**Miller's Crossing**—The Coen brothers deliver yet another powerful film, this one rich with melancholy in a Prohibition gangster town somewhere. Strong acting, crisp script, and a thoughtful wink behind the drama.

**Mississippi Burning**—Reviewed on page 16.

**Moscow on the Hudson**—Delightful. Soviet musician defects in Bloomingdale and becomes involved in a series of friendships with other immigrants. Robin Williams excels. Borders on patriotic.

**Murder on the Orient Express**—An excellently executed film version of Agatha Christie's intricate novel. A whodunit situated on an elegant train with an all-star cast headed by Albert Finney. A topnotch mystery treatment. One of the rare cases where a whole galaxy of name stars perform well together, thanks to Sidney Lumet's direction.

**My Bodyguard**—A small movie which combines a simple story and basic feelings into an



**The Natural**—Robert Redford stars as a farm boy who gets a chance to play for the Chicago Cubs. In his innocence he meets tragedy. Fifteen years later he attempts a comeback and becomes caught in a complex web of focus. Superb acting, subtle direction, and outstanding photography combine in this fantasy of life.



excellently portrayed drama. Put a bright little kid, a bully, and a big kid in a public school, and you got trouble. Fun and tender. Maybe too sentimental.

**My Brilliant Career**—Excellent acting and pacing crown this delightful Australian film about a spirited and intelligent turn-of-the-century young farm girl and her wish to become a writer.

**The Natural**—Reviewed on page 17.

**Never Cry Wolf**—A very worthwhile film. Dazzling photography. Takes one into feelings and perspectives you'll never forget. Not as boring as it sounds. A biologist lives among the wolves and Eskimos way up north.

**Night Moves**—More a character study than a thriller. Gene Hackman as a private eye gets more involved in a sticky case than he had counted on, and look what we learn about him. There is a tender core to this Arthur Penn picture because Hackman's a sensitive actor, Penn's a good director, and the editor did his job splendidly.

**1900**—A four-hour Italian epic by Bertolucci, sketching the key themes of a nation in change. Begins turn of the century and ends with Liberation Day in 1945. Graphic. Beautifully photographed and directed. The actors serve the director's vision. And what a vision it is! Contains some truly remarkable, unforgettable cinematic moments. But take your pillow along for the slow

parts. Robert De Niro, Dominique Sanda, Burt Lancaster, and Donald Sutherland all deliver.

**Nunzio**—A fantasy about a handicapped teenager who tries to cope in the city and becomes the hero of his world. Admittedly tender, it musters hope.

**Nuts**—Exceeds expectations. Martin Ritt's film about a high-priced prostitute (played by Barbra Streisand) who is accused of killing one of her "clients." Streisand is marvelous, as is Richard Dreyfuss as her lawyer, who tries to keep her from being committed for mental illness.

**Oh, God**—This movie will bother churchgoers who take it too seriously; it will be thoroughly enjoyable to those who see it as entertainment



**A Passage to India**—First, one must acknowledge the joyous energy one experiences when an artist, who has made a brilliant contribution over many years, returns with a piece of work as masterful as his earlier art. David Lean, at age 76, has done just that with *A Passage to India*.

Set in India in the 1920s, Lean's film probes both the social structures and the personal experiences of the British rule of the subcontinent. Based on E.M. Forster's novel of the same title, the film focuses on the intersections of East meeting West, spiritual colliding with material, and the brooding human spirit at odds with the human desire to organize.

This film unveils a period of time when the British assumed it their God-given responsibility to rule the "inferior" races of the world. The story introduces us to this colonial world through the eyes of an attractive young woman, Adela Quested (superbly brought to life by the acting of Judy Davis). Adela has come to India to visit her fiancé, accompanied by his mother, Mrs. Moore.

At first there is the natural beauty, the grandeur. Then the people, swarming, pushing, reaching. Ronny, Mrs. Moore's son, steps into the receiving line, and we are disturbed by his "ruling" spirit. Then we escape to the island of Britanny, surrounded not by water but by a control that keeps the Indians out. Lean succeeds in luring us into this confrontation and in shocking us by the callous cruelty of the British.

Peggy Ashcroft creates a believable character for Mrs. Moore—saintly, concerned, yet somehow distant from her son and Adela. If the film has a star, it is Victor Banerjee as Dr. Aziz. Full of energy, eager to please, Banerjee etches an Aziz so well characterized that he seems closer to us than any other character. And he is oppressed, falsely accused, belittled by his enthusiasm to accommodate, and yet so very human. Aziz represents India as much as Adela embodies the ambivalence of England.

The scandal turns on a moment immediately following the touching of hands. Climbing the hill to the celebrated caves, Aziz reaches out to help Adela up the hill. The echo of the cave, the repressed sexuality of the young woman, the confusing energy of benevolent conqueror being served by the eager host Aziz—all contribute to an experience which leads Adela to accuse the kind doctor poet of attempted rape. Chaos ensues.

*A Passage to India* rivets scenes on one's memory. Lean's grand style serves this story well, for the most part. The ending seems to flounder, groping for a way to drop the curtain. But the acting is brilliant and the directing first-class. A satisfying film experience which leaves one with images and questions for many years to come.

(with a little orthodoxy to boot). George Burns (as God) visits John Denver, the supermarket assistant manager, and tells him to spread the word. The whole thing sounds familiar.

**On the Nickel**—A touching, straightforward look at life among L.A.'s skid-row winos, poignantly acted (also written and directed) by Ralph Waite. Its good intentions are visible, but it does not manipulate. Artistically and humanly

moving. Excellent for caring people.

**Once Around**—A delight! The unmarried daughter of a close-knit Italian family falls for a lovable, obnoxious super-salesman. Looks at life, love, and cross-cultural relations. Offbeat and entertaining.

**One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest**—Two actors save this story from triteness—Jack Nicholson as the rebel patient in a mental hospital and Louise

Fletcher as his nurse. Their performances lift the story from the usual humdrum (who is really sane/insane?) to a powerful emotional experience.

**Padre Padrone**—This film permits us to see part of the truth. Simple, countrified story of an illiterate Sardinian shepherd boy. Cuts (almost crudely) to the heart of the basics. It'll haunt you.



**Places in the Heart**—*Places in the Heart* etches images one will remember. Set in the Great Depression in Texas, the restrained acting, the turgid cinematography, and the extraordinary characters whom others think ordinary have created an important little film.

The religious themes abound. Hope and forgiveness can barely hide their visages. And the unexpected ending, abrupt and full of fantasy, underscores the themes—too obvious and heavy-handed for some; just delightfully unorthodox for others.

A sheriff, shortly after offering thanks for his meal and his life, is called away to calm down a young black man who is so drunk he is dangerous. He shoots his gun into the air, turning to show the sheriff how harmless he is, only to accidentally squeeze the trigger.

The sheriff's widow is shocked. The

community grieves. And the black youth is lynched and hung without a trial.

Sally Field portrays Edna Spalding, the widow, in a masterful performance. Edna hasn't the slightest idea how to make a go of their 40-acre farm. This film, written and directed by Robert Benton (*Kramer vs. Kramer*), tells the story of her fight to save her farm and to keep her children together.

The triumph of the characterizations arises out of Benton's ability to flesh out the several main characters by showing us their various sides. Edna herself blossoms and grows before our very eyes. She is defiant; she is forgiving. She struggles to whip her son, an assignment always taken care of in earlier days by her husband. She refuses charity from her family. She determines to save the farm when the local banker urges her to sell it and place her two children with relatives.

A black itinerant worker, Moze, wants work. She turns him down but gives him food. When the sheriff shows up with Moze and the silver he stole from Edna's kitchen, she gambles to forgive Moze and hopes he will help her save the farm.

The banker, as "charitable" a deacon as you'll find, very "thoughtfully" unloads his blind brother-in-law on Edna as a boarder. Mr. Will at first covets only privacy.

But as the story unfolds, Edna, her two children, Moze, and Mr. Will all become intertwined. On paper, the plot sounds goody-goody and unexciting. But on the screen, Benton has painted a literary film, full of pathos, despair, and hope.

The restraint not only saves the film, it gives it integrity. The subplot of Edna's sister Margaret, her husband Wayne, and his affair with Margaret's best friend forms a helpful counterpoint to Edna's tale. But even that passion is heightened by restraint.

Benton has presented us with a memorable film, a story carved out of pain and injustice. This very worthwhile film probes the Christian and universal themes of betrayal, survival, hope, and, in a dozen ways, forgiveness.

Regrettably, Benton indulges himself in a religious parable as an epilogue to the story. To this reviewer, the ending was overkill. Why destroy a strong story with a hazy parable?

Nevertheless, *Places in the Heart* is a film no thoughtful filmgoer should miss.



**Pale Rider**—Clint Eastwood's masterpiece. The script, the acting, the pacing, the cinematic vision—all contribute to this Western classic. A preacher who's also a gunfighter helps a town in Gold Rush days fight off a crooked oppressor.

**The Paper**—A delicious romp of a film about 24 hours in the life of the staff of a big city newspaper. Beneath the comedy breathe genuine struggles to maintain a marriage, save the paper, and cling to a sense of ethics. Superb entertainment.

**Paper Moon**—Truly a delight. Ryan O'Neal, believe it or not, can act, as can his real-life daughter, Tatum, who walked off with the Oscar for her performance. Shot in Kansas, set in the

Depression, it portrays the adventures of an orphan girl and a con-artist Bible salesman. Nostalgia ala Bogdanovich. Very funny.

**Paradise Alley**—A powerful film with excellent writing, acting, and directing about three immigrant brothers trying to get out of poverty in 1946. Full of pathos. Stars Sylvester Stallone.

**The Parallax View**—A gripping whodunit that outclasses *Executive Action* like a tiger outclassing an alley cat. A senator gets shot on the top of the big sky needle in Seattle. A reporter dogs the incident three years later, grasping at clues. Warren Beatty is marvelous to watch, and the movie will tantalize you.

**Pascali's Island**—A beautiful painter, a Turkish spy, and an Englishman who calls himself an archaeologist intermingle in this mystery of meetings and motives. Fall of the empire. Solitary life.

**Passion Fish**—A voluptuous saga, set in Bayou country. A soap opera star suffers an accident, goes home to mend, and tangles with her nurse. Memories, anger, brooding waters, and romance. Outstanding performances complement witty script.

**A Passage to India**—Reviewed on page 18.

**The Pathfinder**—A primal tale, set among and filmed by the peoples of the far north. A young man outwits the enemy to defend his people. Outstanding.

You'll either love **Raising Arizona** or you'll think it's dumb.

Humor works that way. Some die laughing at Bob Hope's wisecracks, while others find his humor almost disgusting. Some break a leg (or sleep during church the next morning) to watch *Saturday Night Live*, while others think that humor revolting. And on and on.

Bob Hope fans probably won't like **Raising Arizona**, a movie so zany, high speed and off-the-wall that one has to suspend any temptation to figure it out. This reviewer found it to be one of the better full-length attempts at sustaining a full-fledged story line in the uproar of modern madcap humor.

Hey, the story's easy enough to comprehend. H.I. has a thing for robbing convenience stores, see, so he's familiar with the prison routine, including the moment of being booked. Each time he tries to be friendly to this woman-cop named Ed who's booking him, and, finally, several parole-board hearings later, he persuades her to marry him. Average humdrum American story so far.

Well, H.I.'s disappointed that he and Ed can't have any children, hard as they try, and they're barred from adopting children because of his criminal record. Then they hear of a brassy furniture tycoon whose wife has just had quintuplets. Hey, there's an idea, and it's not likely to be as hard as knocking over a 7-Eleven!

The scene of kidnapping Nathan, Jr., has to be one of the most comical, zany scenes in recent years. The Coen brothers (remember **Blood Simple**?) who wrote, directed, and produced **Raising Arizona** are clearly poking fun at the baby-boomer generation (Dr. Spock's book becomes the symbol of greatest treasure!). Perhaps their sharpest harpoon zings the modern tendency of parents to pamper and spoil the same children they treat as a nuisance and bother.

The breakneck pace of this farce runs dry at times, but remains amazingly consistent and somehow sweetly lyrical. The tone of the dialogue proves the key, with convicts who've just broken out of prison speaking like well-bred English professors fresh from a therapy session.

All humor suspends belief, jumps a track, and points a chuckling finger at sacred cows. Each style of humor takes on its own conventions, and those who enjoy it follow the leap of the humorist. Bob Hope spins a yarn that suspends reality, and millions roar. Woody Allen suspends belief in a different way. And the *Saturday Night Live* style of humor, while perhaps more audacious and madcap, functions with all the characteristics of comedy. Some find each style less than funny, even revolting and irreverent; others find its conventions exactly what they need for a hearty laugh.

Chevy Chase and many others from the madcap tradition have tried limpingly to create a full-length movie. Most have failed. **Raising Arizona**, however, is one of the most creative, inventive, and absolutely funny movies of its kind.





**Place of Weeping**—A poignant story of a variety of persons and their reactions to a murder in rural South Africa.

**Places in the Heart**—Reviewed on page 19.

**Platoon**—A vivid, graphic depiction of the Vietnam War. A young recruit is thrown into the middle of the brutal war in 1967. Flirts with preachiness, but achieves cinematic excellence.

**The Playboys**—A poignant, classic tale set in a small Irish town in 1957. An unmarried young woman gives birth, and the religious folks are scandalized. A small group of traveling players ("The Playboys") comes to town. A failed policeman, romance, and smuggling flesh out a rich story with unforgettable characters.

**Poltergeist**—A splendid horror story full of warmth, violence, and endless symbolism. Spooks haunt the happy home of a suburban family. Not bloody and bizarre. Even the evil is full of wonder. Ala Spielberg.

**The Prince of Tides**—A restless, unhappy man from South Carolina goes to New York to help his suicidal sister and faces his own demons when he meets her psychiatrist. Very moving throughout, involving and brave.

**Racing with the Moon**—Wonderful film about growing up. Sean Penn and Elizabeth McGovern capture the nuances of this tender love story. Superb direction by Richard Benjamin.

**The Raggedy Man**—Sissy Spacek stars as a poor but determined mother-divorcee caught in the forsakeness of 1940. A magnificent etching of pain and hope.

**Ragtime**—An impressionistic, masterful cinematic eyeful, set in turn-of-the-century America. A black man takes revenge against a callous, indecent white race. Very involving. It will follow you.

**Raiders of the Lost Ark**—A picture that has everything—adventure, mystery, romance, intrigue. And spectacular visuals by Steven Spielberg. Indiana Jones tries to beat a bunch of Nazis to the lost Ark of the Covenant.

**Rain Man**—A gem. Dustin Hoffman excels as Raymond, an autistic adult who has spent most of his life in institutions. Tom Cruise plays his hot-tempered hustler of a brother. The story of their trip across the country has many twists and turns, but in the end this unlikely film becomes a poignant triumph.

**Raise the Red Lantern**—Another visual feast by the same Chinese director who brought us *Ju Dou*. A cinematic portrait in bright colors of the initiation of a wealthy man's fourth wife in 1920s traditional Chinese society. Poetically dramatic. In Mandarin with English subtitles.

**Raising Arizona**—Reviewed on page 20.

**Rear Window**—Revival of the Hitchcock classic starring James Stewart and Grace Kelly. A photographer with a broken leg gets involved in the lives of his neighbors with help of his girlfriend.

**Reds**—An epic feast of a film, starring Warren Beatty (wearing many hats) as young American radical John Reed in a triangle with his wife, his ideas, and himself. Set against the sweeping backdrop of the Russian revolution, it is an engaging "big" film, in spite of being an hour too long. Diane Keaton is marvelous as Louise Bryant, his comrade and lover. The politics are a bit heady and overdone, but that doesn't ruin the film. A true delight.

**The Remains of the Day**—Anthony Hopkins hands in a powerful, unforgettable portrayal as Stevens, the discreet, bottled-up butler. This outstanding film depicts life among the servant class in England in the 1930s. Astounding restraint produces highly emotional atmosphere. Superb entertainment.

**Resurrection**—Ellen Burstyn is our unorthodox healer in this poignant tale about a woman who was clinically dead and then revived. She has no "calling," and that's the trouble—to others.

**The Return of Martin Guerre**—A fascinating prodigal-son story set in 16th-century France in which a husband returns to his wife, only to be suspected of being an imposter. Strong acting; clever directing. Superb.

**Rocky**—An inexpensive character study of superior quality. Tells the story of a loser who wins while he loses, an unknown boxer in Philadelphia who is challenged (for show and money) by the world heavyweight champion. Only stubborn Rocky thinks it's for real. Sensitive writing and portrayed by Sylvester Stallone.

**Roger and Me**—An intentionally one-sided, but hilariously successful, documentary about the corporate faults and greed of General Motors and GM chairman Roger Smith. Clever and entertaining, though clearly biased.

**Romero**—A powerful film based on the true story of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero. Raul Julia is superb as Romero. Few Mennonites will not be touched by the conviction of this Christian man of God. Not without flaws, yet cohesive and masterful.

**The Russia House**—An excellent *glasnost*-era thriller, superbly acted by Sean Connery and Michele Pfeiffer. A less than astute British publisher is caught between a Soviet scientist, a beautiful female contact, and the western intelligence services. Gentle and poignant.

**Saturday Night Fever**—John Travolta is super at the Brooklyn disco. A mix of old and new, both in theme and technique. Growing up Catholic in New York.

**Say Anything**—A gem. Among the tons of teen pictures, this story about a brilliant but lonely girl and her friendship/romance with a nonconformist stands tall. Great writing, acting, directing.

**Seven Beauties**—Lina Wertmüller's complex story about how much one is ready to trade in order to survive; what price dignity. Its subject is timeless, though set in Nazi Germany.

**Silkwood**—Gripping story about a complex woman who works at a nuclear plant, gets involved as a union organizer, and dies in a mysterious car accident. Meryl Streep, as usual, serves up a stunning performance as the fragile, mixed up, but stubborn Karen Silkwood. Regrettably, the movie somehow lacks a cohesive soul.

**Sister Act**—It's wholesome, it's funny, it's musical. Whoopie Goldberg goes underground after witnessing a mob murder and ends up in a strict convent. Delightful.

**Six Degrees of Separation**—A delightful, literate, crisp but thoughtful comedy/drama about a wealthy, liberal "open-minded" Fifth Avenue couple who are conned in their own home by a young hustler who knows how to confirm their own illusions. More intelligently delicious than most films.

**Sleeper**—Woody Allen's best. Positively delightful. Full of Allenesque comedy and wit. A Greenwich Village health-food store owner who is hospitalized for an ulcer operation wakes up 200 years later wrapped in foil. Diane Keaton's in top form, too.

**Sneakers**—One of the most intelligent caper movies in years. Great script, superb acting, and engaging pace accent this high-tech thriller about security and secret codes.

**A Soldier's Story**—One of the finer films in recent months, this murder mystery probes the heartbreaking dilemmas faced by a black investigator. Sensitive, moving, tough. Superb acting.

**Southern Comfort**—A graphic, gorgeous, riveting thriller about violence in the swamps of Louisiana. Beautifully filmed in a setting of beguiling innocence, this film is devastating in its insights into the world of warfare.

**Starting Over**—A moving, comic, more-honest-than-usual story of a writer who is thrown out by his wife, his loneliness and uncertainty, and his tentative, ambiguous attempt to rebuild. Burt Reynolds, Jill Clayburgh, and Candice Bergen all shine in this unusually topnotch tale.





**A World Apart**—A gem of a small picture, based on a true story, set in South Africa in 1963. An uncompromising white journalist (Barbara Hershey) takes an increasingly firm stand against apartheid and pays her price. But her children pay a price, too. Director Chris Menges counterpoints the struggles of the mother/martyr against the trauma of her children. Beautifully photographed; strongly acted. Much better than *Cry Freedom*.

**Stolen Children**—A heart-wrenching portrait of a reluctant Italian policeman who accidentally becomes responsible for two children who've become wards of the state. Painterly in its cinematography. Very touching. In Italian with subtitles.

**The Story of Adele H**—A magically done film which succeeds wonderfully in its cinematography and acting. But it wavers in its attempt to show the workings of a girl's mad mind.

**The Sting**—Hardly the best picture of the year, but one of the better ones, to be sure. Paul Newman and Robert Redford team up against Robert Shaw in the most delightful intrigue story of the year (why don't all those other half-horse pictures just go away?). There's a new turn at every twist. Set in the 1930s in Chicago.

**Stroszek**—A sensitive film by Werner Herzog, West Germany's notable director. Three persons, outcast for various reasons, cope to survive in the

Old World. It is hard. So they come to the New World where things aren't much better. Well crafted, well acted, and soulful.

**The Sunshine Boys**—Two elderly cronies are awfully funny enemies in this tender comedy on the twists and turns of old age. George Burns in a sterling performance keeps the thing from going out of control.

**The Taking of Pelham One Two Three**—Robert Shaw, Walter Matthau, and Martin Balsam steal the show in this first-rate thriller about the hijacking of a subway train in New York City.

**Tell Me a Riddle**—A deeply moving portrait of a dying Russian immigrant and her quarrelsome husband. Well acted with a sensitive mood.

**Tex**—Don't be put off by the Disney label. A poignant but funny look at the frustrated life of an Oklahoma teenager. Matt Dillon stars.

**Thelma and Louise**—An excellent story about two women who get caught in a violent web which leads to freedom and destruction.

**Thief**—A powerful cinematic portrait of a professional thief who loses his independence by his greed. Strong performance by James Caan in a superbly crafted near-classic.

**The Thin Blue Line**—A potent, unsettling mix of documentary and fictionalized points of view, scrutinizing the murder of a Texas policeman in 1976. Is the wrong man in prison? A masterpiece of cinema.

**3 Women**—Master filmmaker Robert Altman's creation consists of an intense dreamy impressionistic unpeeling of an odd group of characters. Which is certainly sufficient subject matter for any film, much less someone of Altman's talent. Shelley Duvall and Sissy Spacek hand in marvelously honed performances.

**Tous les Matins du Moude (All the Mornings of the World)**—A poetic, emotional classic, set in 17th century France. If you can adapt to the slow pace, you'll be overwhelmed by the power and poignancy of this film. A somber, accomplished musician seeks love and perfection in the strings of his viol.

**Trading Places**—A delicious comedy about two wealthy brothers who launch a wager about heredity versus environment by contriving to ruin their head broker's life (Dan Aykroyd), concurrent with the elevation of a poor streetwise con man (Eddie Murphy). Superb acting, strong plot development, funny and satisfying.

**The Tree of the Wooden Clogs**—A wonderful epic film about an oppressed Italian community of peasants. Full of dignity, unpeeling the lowliness of their humanity, but turgid with rich human spirit. Following many characters

through the forsakenness of their lives, this saga triumphs as a near-masterpiece. A bit lengthy.

**Tribute**—A bit soupy, but otherwise touching, film about a shallow man facing death with an ex-wife and an angry son. Uneven, but full of energy.

**Tucker: The Man and His Dream**—Jeff Bridges fills the screen with the larger-than-life character of Preston Tucker, an American dreamer who "saw" the car of the future and then built it. Based on a true story. Francis Ford Coppola directs this streamlined vehicle with style. The big guys don't like Tucker, of course.

**The Turning Point**—Two former ballet friends, reunited in middle life, ponder the roads not taken. Anne Bancroft and Shirley MacLaine both deserve Oscars. The marvel is the mix of complexities, taking a non-polemic look at the joy

and tragedy of womanhood, blending the old and the new in a dazzling story for all seasons.

**The Two Jakes**—A lavishly compiled detective yarn starring and directed by Jack Nicholson. Set in L.A. in the '40s, with oil, sex, and murder confused with loyalty. Handsome, delicious thriller.

**The Untouchables**—An unforgettable entertainment. Prohibition gangs in Chicago, Al Capone, and the earnest Eliot Ness. Witty and delectable.

**The Verdict**—Another strong, engaging performance by Paul Newman in a film which raises questions about the ethics of the medical profession. A failed lawyer takes a malpractice suit against the powers (including a church-operated hospital). Superb.

**Wargames**—Hang on to your hats! This John Badham thriller about a high school computer

It's hard to put **Yentl** into a convenient category. That doesn't keep it from being powerful, engaging, and strangely moving.

Is it a musical? No. Barbra Streisand calls it a dramatic film with music. In this way especially it defies traditional categories with one lone singer and no "production numbers" and dances. But the music the way Streisand performs it actually becomes more powerful than an old-fashioned musical.

The music is only one of the three "unique" aspects of **Yentl**. The more obvious feature headlines Streisand. Not only does she play the difficult lead role with outstanding deftness and credibility, not only does she perform the music, and not only is she co-author of the screenplay: Streisand is producer of this picture and she directs it with a crisp vision which as a debut would alone win plaudits for any other new director. The camera lets us see and helps us enter worlds unknown without feeling self-conscious or intruding.

The third unique aspect of this movie stems from its sources. **Yentl** is based on a tale by I.B. Singer, "Yentl, the Yeshiva Boy." A Broadway show in 1974 was also based on his story. (Singer has been less than happy with Streisand's movie, but then Singer is less than happy a great deal.)

Aside from Streisand's history-making tour de force, the sources, and the use of the music, how does **Yentl** stand up? If one were to see the film without knowing any of the above, would it engage and entertain?

This reviewer believes so. Granted, it's a popular medium for a very serious setting, but when have books and learning been given so much dramatic sympathy lately!

A rabbi's daughter somewhere in Eastern Europe about the turn of the century develops so much longing to study the Torah and the Talmud (forbidden to women) that she disguises herself as a boy named Anshel so she can study in a yeshiva (a Jewish religious school). Things get complicated when her/his best friend Avigdor (played brilliantly by Mandy Patinkin) tries to get Yentl/Anshel to marry Avigdor's bride-to-be (Amy Irving is great) when the marriage falls through.

The movie explores issues of faith, love, learning, and human fullness. But the story's strength is not mushed up by the insistence of these issues. **Yentl** probes, engages and delights.





whiz kid who innocently enough starts sending commands from his home computer to the Pentagon's super-secret war brain will entertain (and maybe sober) you more than all the summer sequels wrapped in one. A bit too preachy, but clever and bristling.

**Ways in the Night**—A thoughtful, powerful German film about a young German soldier who loves culture and the arts. During the Nazi occupation of Poland he falls in love with a woman in the resistance movement who also is devoted to the arts. Can the finest in our past overcome the hostilities of the present? You won't forget it.

**When Harry Met Sally . . .**—A delightful movie, with sensibilities close to Woody Allen's which asks the question, "Can a man and a woman really be friends?" Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan are tops as the couple who reluctantly fall in love over 13 years.

**White Dawn**—A distinctly unique story about an unusual people. Mennonites should find this picture about Eskimos of the Far North and the

tragedy ushered in by civilization and progress partly familiar. And poignant. Features Timothy Bottoms, Warren Oates, and Lou Gossett.

**Who Framed Roger Rabbit?**—A masterpiece, blending animated and human characters in a whodunit that mixes the best of the Spielberg school with the cream of the old cartoon techniques. A human private eye investigates strange doings in Toontown, the ghetto for cartoons when they're finished at the studio. Very delightful.

**Whose Life Is It, Anyway?**—A superb, highly involving film about a sculptor who becomes paralyzed and decides he wants to die. Richard Dreyfuss is brilliant as the bright, angry, cynical victim. Is the story too slanted?

**Witness**—Peter Weir's masterful cinematic vision of the quest for peace in a violent world. A Philadelphia detective (Harrison Ford's first fine acting) flees to the farm of the sole witness to a police murder, an Amish boy, Samuel. Kelly McGillis is brilliant as Rachel Lapp. Amazing

accuracy in capturing the spirit of both the detective and the Amish characters. Unnecessary semi-nudity is unfortunate. Suspenseful, poignant, and powerful.

**A World Apart**—Reviewed on page 22.

**A Year of the Quiet Sun**—A wonderfully muted study of the relationship of a Polish refugee (just after World War II) with a quiet, gentle American soldier.

**Yentl**—Reviewed on page 23.

**Young Frankenstein**—Topflight Mel Brooks corniness in every detail. From the zipper in the monster's neck to Marty Feldman's wandering eyeballs, this film bounces one joke off another to the end.

**Zelig**—Woody Allen presents the most unlikely film—a documentary, primarily in black and white, about a nobody who becomes somebody by being nothing. Hilarious, poignant, crisp, very worthwhile. Allen stars with Mia Farrow.

# SEVEN

**The Accidental Tourist**—Macon Leary withdraws from life after the death of his son. Understated, funny, and a bit offbeat. Strong acting; slow pace.

**The Accused**—A biting picture about foul-mouthed Sarah, her flirtatious visit to a bar, and the gang-rape she experienced. Jodie Foster is superb.

**The Adventures of Huck Finn**—A first-rate adventure, based on one of the greatest American novels. It's Huck's story here, fresh and snappy, rather than a literary analyst's fog.

**Aladdin**—Disney-animated musical features a street urchin, a sultan's daughter, a wonderful magic carpet, and a genie. Very imaginative and magical.

**Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore**—Here's a woman, forced into independence when widowed. It's tough being a free woman; it takes practice. Ellen Burstyn does a fine job as Alice trying to stand on her own two wobbly feet. Another interesting character played out in a weakening story with an organ-music ending.

**All the Right Moves**—A warm, personable picture about high school seniors in a dreary steel town whose only hope of escape seems to be a football scholarship to college.

**Altered States**—Energetic and surreal attempt by a brilliant scientist to leave his body. Absurdly enjoyable.

**Always**—Snappy script and top-drawer acting invigorate this smoky tale of a firefighting daredevil (Richard Dreyfuss) who dies saving a buddy, only to return as an unseen presence commissioned to help his wife (Holly Hunter) find happiness. Poignant.

**American Graffiti**—A dose of nostalgia mixed with some fine acting brings back the summer of '62 and the night life of a California town. It is about high school kids learning about themselves and growing up, mixed with the fads, music, and cars of those times of innocence.

**And Now My Love**—A clever little French love story that tries something so successfully, one wonders it was never tried before—charting the social and psychological backgrounds of the very modern young couple who happen to sit beside each other on a plane and fall in love at first sight. The story starts with their respective grandparents and builds to the romance three generations later.

**Angelo, My Love**—A highly unusual, very engaging picture by Robert Duvall about a young Gypsy boy in New York. Duvall uses non-actor, real-life Gypsies to play the leads in his fictional tale of a feud over a stolen ancestral ring.

**Another Man, Another Chance**—French filmmaker Lelouch's charming yarn about a widowed photographer and a widower veterinarian (Genevieve Bujold and James Caan). European in the Wild West. Enchanting, but a mite slow.

**Au Revoir les Enfants (Good-bye Children)**—Louis Malle's exquisite film about 11-year-old Julien, a self-confident student in a French Catholic school whose clever taunts almost betray a Jewish student being hidden during the Nazi Occupation. Restrained and well done, but lacks something. In French.

**Backdraft**—A spectacular drama about two brothers, both firemen like their father. The fire becomes a character. Absorbing.

**The Bear**—A totally original documentary adventure about a bear cub and a full-grown grizzly. From the animal's point of view. Captivating. Young children may be overwhelmed by the realism.

**Belle Epoque**—A charming but unlikely tale set in 1931 Spain. A handsome army deserter and former theological student finds refuge in the home of an eccentric artist and his four daughters. In Spanish.

**Betrayed**—Riveting acting (Ben Kingsley, Patricia Hodge, Jeremy Irons) and excellent writing (Harold Pinter) come together in a gripping tale of a love triangle. Pinter cleverly unpeels the relationships in reverse (from the end of the affair to the beginning). Both enhanced and limited by the word-dependence of the playwright.

**Big**—A superb entertainment. A boy wishes to be a man, and gets his wish—he gets the man's body and keeps his 12-year-old emotions and maturity. The corporate ladder can't handle him!

**The Big Fix**—Fun. Richard Dreyfuss fills the screen as a small-time gumshoe caught between radicals and the establishment. Plot is too murky and seems trapped between the didactic and insincerity. But it's fun.

**The Big Red One**—A rough but masterful episodic vision of war in which the camera seldom opens up, leaving one feeling suffocated, which may not be unlike being a soldier. Lee

Marvin is superb as the World War II sergeant. Reminds one of *Red Badge of Courage*, but this one's flawed.

**Birgit Haas Must Be Killed**—Fine acting, fast pacing, and sympathetic scripting place this political thriller (in French and German) several notches above average. French agents trap a young German woman terrorist in Germany.

**Black and White in Color**—This Oscar winner (for Best Foreign Film) deserves attention, though hardly an Oscar. Set in the French and German colonies during World War I, the film traces the militarization of an intelligent youth. Subtle and graphic, this film is probably much more important to Mennonites than *Hearts and Minds*.

**Blind Date**—A young executive is warned that his blind date can lose control. After only one drink, she demolishes his career and his entire life in this clever comedy by Blake Edwards.

**Blood Simple**—When have you seen a hair-raising thriller which is so original and so funny? Offbeat story about four not-so-brights who tangle and re-tangle their relationships. A brilliant debut by director Joel Coen and his producer brother, Ethan Coen.

**Blue**—A stunning portrait of a young widow who tries to find a reason to live, a way to be free, after tragedy. Superb. In French.

**Blue Collar**—Excellent film about a black man caught in the realities of the labor movement and the no-nonsense world of survival. Strong story and acting. Stars Richard Pryor.

**Blue Thunder**—A thriller helicopter picture. A force within the force (police) preparing for the ultimate terror (at the L.A. Olympics), only to become the terror itself. Lone man up against the corrupted forces. Triumph, of course, is satisfying, but not excellent. Roy Scheider scores.

**Body Heat**—A sizzling melodrama about a lazy lawyer falling for a beautiful woman one hot summer. It gets complicated. Engaging and well done if this is your cup of tea.

**Born on the Fourth of July**—Oliver Stone directs with imagination and emotive energy, but why do I always feel manipulated? Tom Cruise stars as Ron Kovic, the young Marine who was wounded in Vietnam and became an activist.

**Bound for Glory**—With a gorgeous camera and a moody tone, this movie based on Woody Guthrie's life etches itself in one's mind. Singer



**Glory**—A brave picture, full of feeling, about the first black regiment raised in the North during the Civil War. Never becomes the epic it could be. Still, it's very moving.

**Going in Style**—A trio of senior citizens decide to rob a bank. Tender, funny, and suspenseful. George Burns, Art Carney, and Lee Strasberg are all excellent as the threesome.

**Goodfellas**—Based on the true story of a young man who grows up in the mob, gets rich, becomes a slave to drugs, and gets caught. Dark, violent, and sensual, but in the end it has a hollow heart, caught between truth and fiction.

**Good Morning, Vietnam**—A very different Vietnam picture. Robin Williams plays a fast-talking, never-breathing military disc jockey who drives the brass up the wall with his no-nonsense approach. Surprisingly witty and effective.

**The Good Wife**—A handsome film set in Australia. A lumberjack's good wife becomes obsessed with being unfulfilled sexually and humiliates everyone. Can steadfast love be enough?

**Grand Canyon**—A masterful look at the collapse of modern life in the city. An ensemble of characters face a growing list of problems. Sensitive and engaging.

**Greased Lightning**—Richard Pryor stars in this story based on the life of America's first black race car driver. Portrays well the frustration and oppression of African-Americans. Good acting and good story.

**The Great Gatsby**—A victim of Madison Avenue oversell, this movie version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's classic novel is nevertheless a near classic film. Captures beautifully the lush mood of the powerful rich whose destructive power accepts no one, not even the poor loser, Gatsby. Fine acting by Robert Redford, Mia Farrow, and Bruce Dern.

**The Great Waldo Pepper**—An unusual mix of delight and insight enhanced by strong acting and effective directing. Robert Redford in his usual excellence plays a stunt flier behind his times, who's distressed by being grounded and obsessed with the question of how great he could become, were he given the chance. Good family fare.

**Gregory's Girl**—An offbeat Scottish film about the joys and troubles of adolescence. A tall bumbling high school student loses his position on the pathetic school soccer team to a beautiful, cool, and adept girl named Dorothy. Very funny, very likable story.

**Groundhog Day**—A delightful comedy about a nasty TV weatherman who is doomed to relive

the same day over and over until he gets it right. Invites all sorts of allegorical interpretation, but essentially it's excellent comedy.

**Guilty by Suspicion**—Robert De Niro as a famous director caught in the web of the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1951. Story of moral courage.

**Gung Ho**—Michael Keaton is very funny as the fast-talking union worker at a closed-down auto plant who lures the Japanese into helping out.

**Hair**—Probably not what you expected. It includes much of the original music from the Broadway musical but livens it up with some plot and characterization. Catchy, bright, and zany, it espouses the gospel of the '60s with the class of the '70s.

**Hard Times**—An excellent film etches out the character of a poor working-class boxer who is moody and independent. Charles Bronson hands in a rare performance, full of life and feeling.

**Hearts of the West**—A sweet, sad little Western about a youngster who'd like to make his fortune in the movies. Alas, he's disappointed as we all knew he'd be, but Jeff Bridges as the lead makes you genuinely sorry.

**Hoffa**—A thick, powerful portrait of one of America's most influential union leaders. Jack Nicholson and Danny De Vito deliver outstanding performances.

**Hoop Dreams**—A classic documentary which follows two boys and their families through the high school years as they dream of making it to the basketball pros. The three hours are definitely worth it.

**Hoosiers**—A sweet but strong story about an over-the-hill basketball coach and an underdog team bucking for the state championship. Familiar but vividly fresh.

**Hopscotch**—Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson star in this highly-amusing, light-hearted story of an angry CIA agent's vengeance. Definitely for the fun of it.

**House Calls**—A modern comedy of manners starring the drowsy but hilarious Walter Matthau and the brittle, brilliant Glenda Jackson in an impossibly inept hospital. It's not Woody Allen, but it is witty.

**Housekeeping**—An eccentric drifter tries to play mother to two teenage nieces. A small picture with evocative gentleness and dour wit.

**The Hunt for Red October**—A high-tech thriller with international intrigue about a senior Soviet submarine commander (played splendidly by Sean Connery) who appears to want to defect. Well directed.

**I Never Promised You a Rose Garden**—An intense look at a young girl's mind and her fear and courage in getting well. Bibi Andersson is excellent as the doctor.

**Ice Castles**—A formula sob picture about a beautiful skater who makes an incredible comeback after an accident blinds her. Full of clichés, but somehow catches a life and wonder of its own.

**Impromptu**—A delicious story, based on the historical romance between Madame George Sand, the celebrated writer, and frail composer Frederic Chopin.

**Interiors**—Woody Allen's first serious non-comedy is profound, flawed, heavy, and O'Neill-like. Excellent acting and photography.

**In the Line of Fire**—A first rate thriller with style and intelligence. A Secret Service agent who is haunted by his performance during Kennedy's assassination is taunted by a new assassin.

**In the Name of the Father**—As a character study of a young Irish prisoner and his father, the story is superb. But the film is marred by sermonizing. Nevertheless, topnotch.

**Ironweed**—A tender portrait of two homeless alcoholics at the end of the Depression. Masterful acting by Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep.

**It Could Happen to You**—A farfetched tale bordering on a morality play (boring!)—but charmingly done. An honest cop who promised to split his lottery ticket as a tip to a waitress faces all sorts of trouble when he wins.

**I've Heard the Mermaids Singing**—Daydreams and disappointments of a temporary secretary. Delightful dissection of the pompous pseudo-artistic world.

**Jagged Edge**—Teddy Barnes (played by Glenn Close) has stopped practicing criminal law. But she caves in to her commitment to stay out of that world when a young, wealthy newspaper magnate needs an attorney. Uncertain about whether or not he killed his wife, Teddy finds herself captured by his charm. A clever thriller.

**Jaws**—More than the publicity campaign works in this thriller. Director Spielberg and company know how to create suspense. It's a blockbuster with few subtleties or fine lines, but good entertainment nonetheless. Richard Dreyfuss is a joy and nearly steals the show from everyone, including the shark.

**The Jerk**—Steve Martin shows great promise in his cinematic debut. A wacky, crude, but winsome, story of a rags-to-riches tramp. Far out.



**Jurassic Park**—Forget the hype—is it any good? It succeeds as a scary adventure about biologically cloned dinosaurs getting out of control. Not for young children

**The Karate Kid**—Old-fashioned tale of a skinny kid who uses his mind (and his body, thanks to a Japanese fairy godfather who teaches him karate) to outwit the mean he-men of his new neighborhood. Sorta sentimental, but fun nonetheless.

**L.A. Story**—Witty, affectionate spoof of California's foibles and excesses. Steve Martin's best role yet.

**The Late Show**—Atmosphere dominates this tongue-in-check private eye picture starring artful Art Carney and the wonderful Lily Tomlin. A highly original scenario in which the effect is more important than the plot.

**Lenny**—Dustin Hoffman again proves himself a masterful actor in this Bob Fosse film about the controversial Lenny Bruce. The picture has a balanced compassionate fairness in its study of a shallow, adolescent mind, helpless and destructive. Valerie Perrine plays a brilliant Honey. Use of black and white is very effective.

**Like Water for Chocolate**—A sensual dream-like fantasy about food, sex, and parents, set in turn-of-the-century Mexico. Visually stunning. Chaotic, romantic, and poetic. In Spanish with subtitles.

**The Little Mermaid**—Imaginative animated adventure of the mermaid who falls in love with the seafaring prince. Funny and engaging for all ages.

**Little Miss Marker**—A rather enjoyable sentimental soup of a tale about a little girl who is given to a bookie in lieu of money. Walter Matthau displays his best snarling-but-browbeaten old dog face as the recipient of the child. Funny and darling.

**Little Shop of Horrors**—A superb offbeat musical about a flower shop full of magic and terrors. Steve Martin is excellent as a mad dentist.

**Lonely Hearts**—A small Australian picture which will bore some and captivate others. Two grownups who have never been married decide to consider it. A middle-aged piano tuner and a younger woman who works in a bank, stumble toward romance. Tender, insightful, satirical.

**Love Affair**—Elegantly mounted, superbly acted remake of the encounter between a playboy and an engaged woman, supposedly redeemed by love. Warren Beatty nad Annette Bening are dazzling.

**Lucas**—One of the better "youth" pictures in quite a while. A 14-year-old "brain" falls in love

with a cute, sensitive, slightly older girl. Genuine emotions.

**Magic**—A haunting thriller about a ventriloquist and his dummy. Anthony Hopkins and Ann-Margret star. The horror seesaws between the make-believe and the real. Could be serious.

**Major League**—A baseball picture that's less artsy than *Bull Durham* but just as much fun. The new woman who owns the Cleveland Indians wants to move them to Miami. She needs terrible attendance. So she insists on bungling and over-the-hill players—until they all find out.

**Malcolm X**—Although clearly a memorial symphony, this too-long movie by Spike Lee pleasingly blends lyricism with fact. Denzel Washington captures the hero part magnificently.

**Manhattan**—Woody Allen's most successful blend yet of wit and pathos. Another look at how people who should be able to find themselves, fail pathetically and humorously.

**Manhattan Murder Mystery**—A very funny movie about sophisticated New Yorkers who turn amateur sleuths, bumbling into life, death, sex, and marriage.

**The Man in the Moon**—Poignant, coming-of-age film about two teenage girls who fall in love with the same boy. Rural Louisiana in the '50s. Small story in a small world, yet rich with emotion and yearning.

**Man on a Swing**—Cliff Robertson and Joel Grey are magnificent as the police chief and the clairvoyant who haunts him while he tries to solve two unusual murders. What makes it even more scary is knowing it's based on a true account.

**March or Die**—What seems to be a formula war frolic reaches a rare depth. The futility of war, the foolishness of bravery stand stark at the end.

**The Marquise of O . . .**—Eric Rohmer's excellent film version of a Kleist story about an honorable woman who mysteriously becomes pregnant and her funny but poignant search for her child's father. The film itself is pregnant with beauty and style. It's also a little stiff.

**Max Dugan Returns**—Neil Simon's first act is superb until the intermission turns out to be the end. A father who ran away and gathered a fortune by illegal means returns years later to claim his widowed daughter and his grandson before he dies. Topnotch while it lasts. Jason Robards, Marsha Mason, and Donald Sutherland (as the cop) are delightful.

**Menace II Society**—A raw but excellent film about a young black man, caught in the sweep of drugs and violence, trying to choose another

path. An impressive first film by the Hughes twin brothers.

**The Milagro Beanfield War**—An eloquent confrontation between Mexican-American dirt farmers and wealthy, corrupt developers. A bit forced.

**Miss Firecracker**—A wonderfully engrossing film about a family of eccentrics in a small Mississippi town. Holly Hunter plays the self-doubting Carnelle with great skill. A delicious sort of offbeat feast.

**Missing**—A conservative businessman (Jack Lemmon) searches for his lost son in a South American country after a military takeover. Obviously the director has political motives, yet the picture becomes engrossing. Sissy Spacek as the lost son's wife is tops, quarreling with Lemmon as they search.

**The Mission**—Haunting music, fantastic visuals, and an excellent church-state conflict make this a picture most Mennonites will enjoy a great deal. Disappointingly flawed by flat characterizations.

**Mona Lisa**—A gem of a heartbreaking gangster film, set in London. A too-innocent driver keeps trying to understand the world he's wandered into.

**Moonstruck**—Seldom can a story work as a tale in its own right at the same moment that it parodies a whole genre of film. But here is success to enjoy with great delight. A delicious ethnic comedy of manners about a widow who becomes engaged to a man who goes to Sicily to visit his dying mother, while she (the widow) accidentally falls in love with his estranged brother. Bouyant. Cher is tops.

**Mrs. Doubtfire**—What it lacks in plausibility, it makes up in witty and hilarious put-on. Robin Williams impersonates a proper English nanny to be close to his children after his wife throws him out. Unfortunately, the wisecracking undercuts the poignant moments.

**Murder at Nightfall**—Chabrol's latest (French) saga of passion and murder will strike you as either profound or silly, depending on whether you buy his story line and like the way he unwinds his tale. A man kills his mistress, who is also his best friend's wife. He gets away with it and is unsuspected. He ends up confessing to both his wife and his widowed friend, only to find them reacting with sympathy and understanding. It drives him crazy.

**Murphy's Romance**—An old-fashioned widower (James Garner) meets a modern-day divorcee (Sally Field) in this charming romance.

**My Favorite Year**—An outstanding performance by Peter O'Toole as the shallow, drunken movie star who appears on live television.



**My Life**—Admittedly, a tear-jerker. A successful Hollywood agent comes to terms with terminal cancer while hoping he can live until his son is born. Poignant.

**My Life as a Dog**—A gentle, wandering Swedish film about 12-year-old Ingemar whose mother is dying of tuberculosis. Growing up bewildered. Wonderful.

**The Nasty Girl**—Directed with high spirits and comedic touch, this German film explores a girl's innocent decision (in the late '70s) to enter an essay contest by writing about her town during the Nazi period. The townspeople don't like it. Well done.

**Native Son**—A gripping film based on Richard Wright's 1940 novel about racism in Chicago. Worthwhile, though a bit muted.

**New York, New York**—Robert De Niro and Liza Minnelli star in a warm 1940s musical about a sax player and a young singer caught in the struggle of success, overwhelmed by music and love, falling apart and sad. Not as bad as it sounds.

**New York Stories**—A treat. Three good to excellent separate short stories by three of the best directors around—Martin Scorsese, Francis Coppola, and Woody Allen. An artist's obsessions, a young girl's dreams, and a Jewish lawyer's fears.

**Nickelodeon**—To be sure, Peter Bogdanovich is a controversial director. With films like this, however, he'll soon be regarded alongside Altman among America's great. He has a sense of literature in his eyes; film lit. But he's super funny, too (as in *Paper Moon* and *What's Up Doc?*). Set in the early days of filmmaking, the story details impressionistically the big boy against the little ones.

**The Night of the Shooting Stars**—A superb Italian drama about the final days of World War II in the Tuscany hills. Caught in the transition between Germans and Americans, the villagers have to make hard choices with little information.

**Night on Earth**—A wonderfully inventive series of five movies within a movie. Conversations between five cab drivers and their passengers in five different cities.

**Norma Rae**—Witty and moving yarn about a poor southern girl in the textile mills who rises to organize the workers. Sally Field at her best, aided by a sharp Ron Leibman as the labor organizer from New York. A bit heavy-handed, but refreshing.

**No Way Out**—A tense thriller set in Washington. International intrigue, abuse of power, murder and romance. Crackling.

**The Odessa File**—Strong performances by Jon Voight and Maximilian Schell accent this generally exciting story of a young German journalist hunting down the truth about Nazi war criminals.

**An Officer and a Gentleman**—A tough but magical story about Zack, his troubled youth, and his passage into manhood. Richard Gere plays the naval officer pilot in training.

**On Golden Pond**—A wonderful, masterful story about growing old and facing death. Katharine Hepburn, Henry Fonda, and Jane Fonda perform at their peak. A 79-year-old professor and his late-sixtyish wife enjoy another summer in their cottage. Daughter visits, bringing her boyfriend and his son. Tender, tough, and funny. Would get a 9 if it weren't wrapped up so neatly in the end.

**Once in Paris**—A spicy little yarn about a naive American screenwriter (Wayne Rodgers) in Paris and the relationships he develops with his driver and the woman next door. Well written, strong pace, and fresh tack.

**One Sings, the Other Doesn't**—A poignant feminist story, partly spoiled by the obvious intentions and oversimplicity. A tale of two women's lives.

**Only When I Laugh**—Marsha Mason (former wife of Neil Simon in real life) plays the wife-actress-mother-ex-wife in Simon's latest movie. It's pretty good stuff about an alcoholic actress who tries to start over by performing her former self as a stage role.

**Only You**—A wonderful, soupy story about a delightfully romantic young woman who pursues her destiny the whole way ti Italy. You'll either call it stupid or charming.

**Orchestra Rehearsal**—Be warned: this entire film records an orchestra rehearsal. But if you have patience with Fellini, you'll never forget this minor but graphic statement about the decline of the West.

**Other People's Money**—Danny De Vito delivers an absolutely outstanding performance as Lawrence Garfield, a pint-sized but bigger-than-life predator who raids vulnerable corporations and walks off gleefully with hundreds of millions. But it is not enough. There's a sadness in the hilarity, a longing in the prize.

**The Other Side of the Mountain**—Tragedy strikes the beautiful people and the tough ones survive in this sensitively done biography of Jill Kinmont who almost skis in the Olympics. Keeps veering away from becoming mushy and manages not to hit you over the head. Good family fare.

**The Outsiders**—Francis Coppola tries his hand at the "misunderstood teenager" picture, com-

plete with bright, lingering colors. One of the better of this type.

**Parenthood**—Few parents will be able to avoid laughing and groaning. This extended family comedy explores most of the approaches to parenthood afoot these days, including the conflict, hopes, and nervous sense of failure.

**Philadelphia**—A seeking-justice courtroom drama about a lawyer who has AIDS. Powerful acting by Denzel Washington and Tom Hanks. A bit heavy-handed, but compassionate nonetheless. The scene about opera ranks among the greatest moments in cinema.

**A Piece of the Action**—A delightful "good deeds" blackmail vengeance with Sidney Poitier, Bill Cosby, and James Earl Jones.

**The Pink Panther Strikes Again**—Pure delight. Peter Sellers as Chief Inspector Clouseau proves once again that the clumsiest detectives are the best (or is it dumb luck?). One of the best comedies of the year, and considerably superior to its predecessor, *The Return of the Pink Panther*.

**The Plot Against Harry**—This 1969, black-and-white film (which was lost and only recently found), exhibits imaginative bounce and uproarious humor. Harry comes out of prison to discover his rackets are in trouble.

**The Power of One**—An unforgettable portrait of South Africa in the '40s and '50s with the formal introduction of apartheid. A young English South African and a young black South African seek for answers. A bit heavy-handed, but memorable.

**Pretty Baby**—Exquisitely photographed by the brilliant French director Malle, this English film unwraps the decadence of a New Orleans brothel. The camera seems to show us hiddenness; we see but we don't. Brooke Shields stars as the child prostitute. More thoughtful than explicit.

**Pretty Woman**—Unlikely but likable story of an uptight but very successful businessman who meets an innocent looking hooker. Well crafted story, witty, and irresistible. Modern "Pygmalion."

**Private Benjamin**—A Goldie Hawn triumph. Very funny tale about a wealthy Jewish princess who gets hoodwinked into the Army and all the rigors she endures. The writing may be stale at points, but Goldie keeps it fresh.

**Prizzi's Honor**—A much entwined tale of gangster-ism, romance, and honor, played to the hilt by Jack Nicholson and Kathleen Turner. A mock serious performance the whole way around (thanks to director John Huston), it loses a bit of its fizz at the end.



**The Professional**—As taut thrillers go, this one offers both action, characterization, and warmth. Very fresh in many ways. A lonely hit man becomes surrogate parent to tough teenage girl.

**Promise in the Dark**—Marsha Mason performs with great skill as the doctor of a brave 17-year-old girl who's dying of cancer. Somber, tough, but gentle, the picture captures a great many insights about our society's approach to death.

**Quick Change**—A hilarious bank robbery, after which the robbers get literally lost in the city, encountering one bizarre delay after another as they try to reach the airport.

**Raging Bull**—Robert De Niro's brilliant portrayal of a champion boxer. Script plays heavily on the violent, but seems confused in the end. Engrossing.

**Rambling Rose**—Excellent acting highlights this genteel portrait of the havoc caused by a poor, helpless, but spirited, 19-year-old girl who is taken in by a well-meaning Southern family during the Great Depression. Sensitive, funny, and involving.

**Regarding Henry**—A big-time lawyer is forced to begin life over after a serious accident. Poignant, thoughtful, and engaging.

**Replay**—An extremely well paced thriller about a woman who loses her memory after an accident and can't remember whether or not she loved her husband. She fights fear and deception to reconstruct her past. French.

**Rising Sun**—High voltage detective film with richly visual texture. A call girl is discovered dead in the board room of a Japanese firm's L.A. headquarters. Layers of intrigue and racism.

**The Rocketeer**—A real treat. Lavish, good humored, and always intriguing. A stunt pilot finds a rocket which straps to his back, discovers a spy ring, and woos his love.

**Rocky II**—Sylvester Stallone may be cocky, but he scores again! Believe it or not he manages suspense, winsome parental love, humor, and slam-bang energy, although the story is virtually a remake of *Rocky I*.

**Rollercoaster**—A surprising thriller. Timothy Bottoms plays a crazy young man who sets bombs in amusement parks. The Sensurround effects help. Pure diversion. George Segal stars.

**The Rose**—Bette Midler plays a grossly unhappy, self-destructive rock star, patterned after Janis Joplin. Depressingly squalid, but poignantly sad and insightful. Stirs and sensitizes.

**Rough Cut**—An ideally delicious tale of two handsome thieves (one male, one female) trying

to con each other and a scheming cop. Unsatisfactory ending takes the icing right out of our mouths. Burt Reynolds stars.

**Roxanne**—A charming update of "Cyrano." Steve Martin portrays the fireman with the huge nose and the big soul. Daryl Hannah shines.

**Saint Jack**—Ben Gazzara portrays an easygoing sex peddler in Singapore whose values gradually evolve. An unusually sensitive film by Peter Bogdanovich. Graphic.

**Sarafina!**—A fairly successful drama with music set in South Africa. A young girl tries to find hope among the violence and oppression. Refreshing and touching.

**Scenes from a Marriage**—A disappointing piece from one of the world's best filmmakers, Ingmar Bergman. The acting by both Liv Ullmann and Erland Josephson is astoundingly magnificent, but the result is more like a clinical videotape than a creative film. Grossly talkative. Far inferior to *Cries and Whispers*.

**Scent of a Woman**—A rather touching portrait of a young girl with a crush on an older man who's blind and doesn't want help, set in beautiful towns of Italy.

**Scent of a Woman**—A monumental performance by Al Pacino as a former war hero whose life has collapsed. His coarse, manipulative treatment of the college student who comes to assist him becomes the story of a childless man and a fatherless boy. Slow pace; taut acting.

**The Scent of Green Papaya**—Saigon in the 1950s, through the eyes of a poor servant girl. Evocative, with all the details of a middle-class household and its problems. Unforgettable. In Vietnamese.

**School Ties**—A sensitive, worthwhile study of a working-class quarterback who receives a scholarship to an upper-crust WASP prep school. Will they discover that he is Jewish? Thoughtful.

**Sea of Love**—A titillating murder mystery with Al Pacino, superb as the detective, and Ellen Barkin, bewitching as his lover, who may or may not be a prime suspect. The ending stretches things a bit. Topnotch drama.

**The Seduction of Joe Tynan**—A well crafted story by Alan Alda about a young liberal senator and the conflicts he faces between his family and his career. A bit too pat, but captures the tension many may feel.

**Sex, Lies, and Videotape**—A very original film. A character study of two sisters, their different approaches to sexuality, and a stranger with a strange videotape habit. Partly profound; partly trendy.

**Shoot the Moon**—A powerful if somewhat melodramatic story of a marriage falling apart and the pain that follows. Superb acting by Albert Finney and Diane Keaton.

**Silverado**—A delicious, overpopulated Western with more subplots than necessary, but topnotch anyhow. Kevin Kline and Linda Hunt are especially good.

**Slither**—A catchy story that'll make you suspicious of brown travel campers. Funny, clever, and well told. James Caan you'll love (Sally Kellerman and Peter Boyle, too) in this wacky hunt for fortune. Entertaining.

**The Snapper**—A loveable film set in Dublin about an unwed, pregnant, 20-year-old daughter and her family's reaction, especially that of her father and her neighbors. Funny and tender.

**Soldier of Orange**—This Dutch film, placed in The Netherlands during World War II, follows several young men who graduated together and their choices, intrigues, and tragedies. Well acted and directed.

**Sommersby**—A superb entertainment about a man returning from a Civil War prisoner camp. Is he a different person or a different man? Jodie Foster excels as the tough, tender wife who takes a chance.

**The Sorcerer**—This movie is not for the squeamish. American director William Friedkin tells the harrowing yarn (with gorgeous photography of awfulness) of four criminals at the end of themselves in a South American jungle. Hard to determine if its aloofness is a weakness or an asset.

**Sounder, Part II**—Sequels are dangerous but this one stands as a story on its own. Set in the deep South, the film is threatened with anemic characters whose struggles seem concocted. But the story changes from milquetoast to muscle in the last 20 minutes. Good family fare.

**A Special Day**—Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni shine as two downtrodden neighbors on a special day in the War (ala Italy).

**Speed**—For pure on-the-edge-of-your-seat thriller, this picture delivers. A city bus will explode if it falls below 50 mph. Quite a challenge for the hero-cop and the woman behind the wheel. Not profound, but who cares.

**Stakeout**—A superb cop story. Richard Dreyfuss and Emilio Estevez are tops, tracking the escaped killer by watching the girlfriend's house.

**Stand By Me**—An unusually well crafted look at the life of a 12-year-old boy. Idyllic summer of '59 in Oregon. Four boys explore life and death.



**Starman**—One of the more interesting (and human) of the science-fiction deluge. Jeff Bridges, with wit and warmth, plays an extraterrestrial responding to the invitation of *Voyager 2*.

**Strictly Ballroom**—A delightful, zany movie about a young dancer who wants to dance his own steps and the young girl who also feels rejected.

**Stripes**—Hilarious, offbeat comedy, starring Bill Murray. Reminiscent of the original M.A.S.H. Two guys join the army and wreak havoc.

**The Stunt Man**—A highly unusual, energetic, and clever film within a film. Peter O'Toole is marvelous. A Vietnam veteran stumbles into a war movie and can't separate reality from the film.

**A Sunday in the Country**—A slow paced, poignant French film about one day in 1912 in the life of an aging painter who is visited by his two children. Unpeels the relationships delicately. The film's like a painting.

**Superman II**—The flashy adventure continues, with the sequel surpassing the original. The hero battles three super-villains.

**Tess**—A lush, fully orchestrated film of Thomas Hardy's story of the rise and fall of a beautiful girl. Exquisite and tragic, but a bit muted.

**Therese**—An extraordinarily stylistic, enchanting story about a young French girl who lived with religious passion and died with quiet joy.

**Three Days of Condor**—Robert Redford, Faye Dunaway, and Cliff Robertson hand in finely tuned performances in a well-honed thriller about a spy ring within the C.I.A. Redford plays a researcher who accidentally turns up a clue about this secret spy group and has to do some moving to keep living.

**Time After Time**—Very hard to describe, this clever treat pits H. G. Wells against Jack the Ripper. Gulp. Like we said, it's hard to describe, but it's fresh and delicious.

**Tin Men**—Two vindictive aluminum-siding salesmen try to destroy each other in this funny, bittersweet glimpse of middle-age losers.

**To Begin Again**—This Oscar-winning (Best Foreign Film) Spanish film will touch you. Vivid story of an aging Nobel laureate returning to his home to visit his old love. Some absolutely riveting scenes, but not a masterpiece. A mite sentimental, but refreshing.

**True Believers**—A topnotch thriller about a burned-out '60s lawyer who used to care but doesn't anymore. The new assistant, fresh out of law school, hassles him back to himself.

**True Confessions**—An excellent look at power and piety and church politics. While not profound, it is deeply disturbing. Robert De Niro plays the Monsignor, and Robert Duvall portrays his brother, the police detective. A powerful tale of the cop saving the priest.

**Twice in a Lifetime**—Gene Hackman, Ellen Burstyn, and Ann-Margret shine. A husband leaves his wife when their children are grown. Mature, frank approach, but seems somehow hollow.

**Madly, Deeply**—A young woman tries to go on with her life after her musician companion dies, but he keeps coming back to haunt and to comfort her. Tender, deeply moving portrait of a relationship.

**An Unmarried Woman**—A funny, painful photograph of a woman seeking herself after her husband leaves her. Less hackneyed than some, but heavy-handed nonetheless. Allen Bates is super. So is Jill Clayburgh as the harried woman.

**Violette**—Claude Chabrol's masterful film about the true story (in Paris in the early '30s) of a teenage girl who poisons her parents. Isabelle Huppert, so good in *The Lacemaker*, hands in another dazzling performance.

**Waterdance**—An unlikely success. Three men, in wheelchairs at a physical-rehabilitation center,

sort through their tragedies to find what life has become. Crisp, witty, and touching.

**Weapons of the Spirit**—A feature documentary about the village of Le-Chambon-sur-Lignon in southern France. The village is credited with saving many thousands of lives, right under Hitler's nose. A truly inspiring story, made in rather mediocre documentary form. Every Mennonite should see it.

**Welcome to L.A.**—This picture appears to deliver more than it actually does. It has the Altman touch (he produced it but did not direct it) but lacks the Altman depth. Sets out to probe the shallowness of show business, but comes up shallow itself. Stars David Carradine, Geraldine Chaplin, Sissy Spacek, Sally Kellerman.

**What About Bob?**—Hilarious yarn about a patient who pursues his psychiatrist into his private life and drives him insane.

**When Father Was Away on Business**—Marvelous portrait of Yugoslavia in the early '50s. A young boy's tart impressions when his father is sent to labor camp. In Serbo-Croatian.

**Wolf**—Watch out. Highly stylized but effective film about a sophisticated editorial director who is accidentally bitten by a wolf. Jack Nicholson is superb.

**Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown**—A hilarious, surreal Spanish film about the indignities of a woman when her lover betrays her and her apartment fills with people and incidents unraveling with exotic absurdity.

**The World According to Garp**—Bizarre, yes, but masterful, too. A boy grows up under the wing of an unconventional mother and her strange friends. He seems less strange, or does he? Robin Williams stars.

**The Air Up There**—An above-average inspirational sports story which, in spite of being set in the outer regions of Kenya, nonetheless follows “the formula” a bit too closely. A disenchanted college basketball coach travels to rural Africa to recruit a very tall and very talented tribesman. Tender and funny.

**After Hours**—A giddy nightmare for Paul Hackett who simply meant to have a nice date. Black comedy by Martin Scorsese.

**Agatha**—Vanessa Redgrave portrays Agatha Christie’s 11 days during which she disappeared from sight in 1926. Imaginary happenings, highly styled, but with a delicious touch. Dustin Hoffman is the eccentric journalist.

**Alex and the Gypsy**—A charming tale about a bailbondsman (Jack Lemmon) and the lady he wants to bail out for four short days, but is afraid to (played beautifully by Genevieve Bujold). The wit, pathos, and small grace of the story give the film a life of its own.

**Alice**—Mia Farrow portrays a wealthy New York woman in this Woody Allen film—a woman who also feels hollow. Allen tries a mix of whimsy and fantasy and tacks on a sermon. Yet it has its special moments.

**Alien**—Builds well, but ends disappointingly. Characterizations are strong, the mysterious fear of space is well sketched, special effects are awesome, but the story peters out.

**The Amateur**—A young man sees his girlfriend killed by terrorists and is drawn into the world of international espionage. Strong performances by John Savage, Christopher Plummer, and Marthe Keller. Graphic.

**American Heart**—A touching tale of a down-and-out father (Jeff Bridges) and son and their relationship, such as it is.

**Amos and Andrew**—An amusing melodrama about racial stereotypes and prejudice. A famous black writer arrives at his newly purchased summer home, only to be ambushed by local police who think he’s a burglar. The film walks a thin line between comedy and painful issues and basically succeeds.

**... And Justice for All**—Al Pacino as a charismatic lawyer who takes on the legal system and has to choose between his career and blackmail. Smacks of *Serpico*, but its overdrawn emotion undercuts its credibility.

**Angel at Heart**—A nightmarish, disturbing thriller blending Faust and voodoo, stylishly con-

cocted by Alan Parker. A seedy detective hunts a crooner from New York to New Orleans in the ‘50s.

**Anna**—A modest but enjoyable story about a former Czech film star who can’t seem to make it in America. Along comes a young actress from her homeland who falls on her charity and who, little by little, steals Anna’s identity, only to become a big star! Richly spun in spite of flaws.

**Annie**—Less than wonderful but better than average musical about a poor orphan during the 1930s who wants to belong to somebody. The characters lack the spark needed to make a stagey production become a human drama.

**Arthur**—A funny film about the middle-aged son of a wealthy man who can’t grow up. Then he meets the very poor girl (Liza Minnelli).

**Author! Author!**—A man’s liberation piece about a playwright (Al Pacino) struggling to cope with the raising of five kids after his wife (Tuesday Weld) walks out. Funny, poignant, and a bit scattered in focus.

**Avalon**—A rich study of the family life of an immigrant family in Baltimore after WWI. Dazzling with light and overwhelmed by emotion, the film begins to limp from a weak story line and characterization and trite dialogue. Yet it sings of memory.

**The Bad News Bears in Breaking Training**—This sequel finds the funny but foul-mouthed kids in Houston trying to win a ball game without a coach. Tender and hilarious by spells.

**Baghdad Cafe**—A charming moment in a California desert when a mysterious German tourist strikes up a friendship with the owner of a desolate truck stop.

**Barfly**—An unusually sensitive portrait of a Los Angeles bum, an alcoholic whose life wavers constantly between comedy and tragedy. Extraordinary performances by Mickey Rourke and Faye Dunaway. Scruffy and tough, to be sure, but for those willing to look at despair, this film succeeds.

**Beetlejuice**—A zany, delightful ghost story about friendly spirits whose lives keep being haunted by live humans. Imaginative.

**Best Friends**—Burt Reynolds acts for a change, and Goldie Hawn shines, funnily. But the script is mush. Two writers who’ve been friends become lovers and decide to marry. The in-laws take the inspiration out of it.

**The Big Easy**—A delicious battle of wits between a mildly corrupt cop and a prim D.A. Romance in New Orleans, with some twists and turns. Somewhat hollow.

**Billy Bathgate**—The journey of a young man who apprentices himself to a leading gangster (played by Dustin Hoffman). The kid earns his way into the inner circle, but decline has beat him there. Involving, but a bit too polite.

**Blade Runner**—A visually delicious film. A mix of Sam Spade and science fiction, set in Los Angeles in 2019. Four genetically manufactured humans (life span of four years) have escaped the chores in outer space to seek out their creator. Acting is superb. Rather violent.

**Blink**—An unlikely thriller about a woman who “sees” a murderer leaving her building. Only problem: she’s been blind for years and her operation only partly restored her sight. Strong acting.

**Blown Away**—A gruff, high-paced thriller laced with Irish sentiments. A bomber with an attitude is loose in Boston. Very involving, but leaves viewer saying, “So what?”

**A Boy and His Dog**—A vivid science fiction piece about survival in the future, the vicious society up-top and the mechanized one down-under. Considerably less innocent than its title indicates.

**The Boy Who Could Fly**—A sentimental but tender fantasy about a new girl in the neighborhood and the mute boy next door.

**Boyz ‘N the Hood**—A fresh, frank look at the destruction of urban violence. A young black man tries to skate the seam to a future beyond the relentless cycle of neighborhood rivalries and senseless death.

**The Breakfast Club**—Why does this portrait of five high school students on Saturday detention seem claustrophobic? Perhaps it should be a play; perhaps it mistakes smug condescension for profundity. Some of the ensemble acting excels.

**Breakheart Pass**—Charles Bronson stars in a thriller tale of murder on a mountain train. A triple-layered whodunit that might surprise you.

**Brothers**—An effective portrayal of the inequity of prison, this film closely parallels the experience of Angela Davis and George Jackson. It tells the story of a man convinced to plead guilty in exchange for a light sentence, but he quickly gets caught up in the brutality of prison. Sensitive.

**Bugsy Malone**—An utterly baffling exercise. Director had a wild idea—making children play gangsters and their women in a mock-serious



story—but one never finds out why. Clever and funny at first, but somehow indecent.

**Bull Durham**—An offbeat, poignant picture about baseball, life, and poetry. Kevin Costner shines as the minor-league lifer who bumps into the brash newcomer.

**Buster and Billie**—A 1948 romance set in backwoods Georgia. Never what it seems, an unusually good film as nostalgia goes these days. Joan Goodfellow's a star in her crafting of a shy teenager. Ending's excessively violent.

**Bustin' Loose**—Hilarious, touching little film about an ex-con (Richard Pryor) and a do-good teacher (Cicely Tyson) escorting an unruly busload of kids across the country.

**California Split**—Elliot Gould fans and George Segal fans will get an eyeful. Robert Altman has directed this tale of two go-for-broke gamblers in Reno. Has some brilliant moments, but doesn't really paste together in the end. Another good try by Altman.

**Camila**—A dark-edged melodrama about a priest who falls in love with a daughter of the aristocracy. Poignant nonetheless. Based on a true event.

**Cannery Row**—A stylish adaptation of John Steinbeck's vision and romanticization of down-and-out losers in California. Stars Nick Nolte.

**Casualties of War**—An arrogant platoon leader has lost all sensitivity in Vietnam; his brutality offends a young soldier in his company who eventually reports his "crime." Based on a true story. Ethical dilemma well crafted, but lacks dimension.

**Cat and Mouse**—A French whodunit by Lelouch, a tricky concoction about the murder of a high-rise builder and film producer. Lacks something.

**Children of a Lesser God**—Could have been a significant film. Too many shortcuts. A teacher in a deaf school falls in love with a young deaf woman. Poignant and strong by spells.

**Chocolat**—A moody, understated memory portrait of a French girl who grew up in Africa in the '50s (her father was a district superintendent). Full of unspoken injustices, repressed sexual attraction, and sorrowful beauty. Slow. In French.

**A Chorus Line**—Less than successful attempt to make cinematic the experience of some dancers auditioning for the chorus of a Broadway show. Lacks magic.

**Cinderella Liberty**—A zappy impressionistic tale of a sailor-about-town, the woman he befriends, and her son. Brilliant in spots. Acting by James Caan and Marsha Mason noteworthy.

**Clear and Present Danger**—An intelligent, classy thriller. Harrison Ford as the abandoned CIA agent. Three concentric wars, all about drugs. Predictable, yet fresh.

**Close Encounters of the Third Kind**—A sometimes trite, uneventful beginning two-thirds becomes suddenly spectacular but fails to gain a unity as story. Richard Dreyfuss in a mix of sci-fi and special effects about visitors from another world. Not as theologically devastating as predicted.

**The Cotton Club**—A whirling, disjointed, but visually intriguing, rat-a-tat-tat through Harlem jazz with gangsters and lavish music. Coppola directs with brilliant moments, but fails to find the soul of the picture.

**Country**—Some powerfully wonderful scenes, and a few very stilted ones, tell the story of an Iowa farm family, threatened with foreclosure. Jessica Lange is outstanding.

**Cousin, Cousine**—A French film of romance with a wonderfully magic touch. Told so well one feels a part of new love unfolding. But in the end it seems more atmosphere than story.

**Cousins**—A man and a woman discover their spouses in an affair and, in getting revenge, accidentally fall for each other. Not as strong as the French original, but charming nonetheless. Isabella Rossellini is superb.

**Crimes of the Heart**—Three great actresses and one of the world's best directors (Bruce Beresford) should have done better, but it is still a worthwhile story about three eccentric sisters.

**Criminal Law**—A well crafted thriller about a lawyer who wins acquittal for his client, much to his regret. Wit against wit.

**Crossed Swords**—A costume picture highlighting swapped identities as the prince and the pauper live each other's lives. Includes some highly delightful moments.

**Crossing Delancey**—Amy Irving stars as a bright, savvy, single Jewish woman whose grandmother tries to make a match of her and a picklemaker named Sam. Warm and delightful.

**The Crying Game**—A movie in three acts, each with its own energy, surprise, and pathos. Highly lyrical, original, and sexually controversial. An IRA soldier weighs relationships.

**Cutter's Way**—Impressionistic sketch of a Vietnam veteran and his friends solving a crime and trying to cope.

**The Cutting Edge**—A rich, talented, spoiled brat can't find a skating partner to train with her for the Olympics. A former hockey player proves her equal in debate and on the ice. Scrappy but fun.

**D.C. Cab**—A coarse but hilarious celebration of the taxi business in the capital city. A little underdog hack company tries to get a slice of the business.

**Dance with a Stranger**—Human passion clashes with reason in this portrait of a night club hostess. Based on the historical character of Ruth Ellis, the last woman hanged in Great Britain, this film gathers about itself the atmosphere, madness, and sheer destruction that Ellis chose. A triangle love affair with class and economic overtones gives the whole obsession depth.

**The Dead**—A moody, stilted tale, too long for a short film, until the ending suddenly brings it to life. Worth the wait. Based on the true story by James Joyce, John Huston's last film seems a fitting, poetic farewell for a great director. Acting is excellent.

**Dead Again**—An artful Gothic thriller, interlocking a Hollywood story from the '40s with a contemporary movieland mystery.

**Deathtrap**—A thriller about a burnt-out playwright and a young creative one, played by Michael Caine and Christopher Reeves. Could have been truly delicious and witty, but becomes stagey and contrived in the hands of Sidney Lumet.

**Death Wish**—A controversial film unleashes Charles Bronson as the sophisticated urbanite who seeks to avenge singlehandedly the tragic death of his wife and the rape of his daughter at the hands of muggers in good old New York City. Unnecessarily manipulative. A trip for city dwellers. First class; slick suspense. Emotionally unfair.

**Die Hard**—A hard-hitting action picture. A group of suave terrorists taking over an office tower on Christmas Eve. Riveting.

**Diggstown**—A tough-talking, bare-knuckles ex-con takes on the crooked landlord who owns most of the little town. Fine writing and superb acting.

**Dirty Rotten Scoundrels**—Michael Caine and Steve Martin play two con men, one suave and one klutzy, who compete to swindle rich, stupid women on the French Riviera. Entertaining.

**The Distinguished Gentleman**—A rollicking entertainment about the corruption of government. Eddie Murphy plays a small-time con man who bluffs his way into the big time (Congress).

**Doc Hollywood**—Hey, it's a sweet old-fashioned comedy, but this one basically works, if you relax. A big shot L.A. plastic surgeon falls for a small-town girl in the boonies. Funny and warm-hearted.



**The Doctor**—An arrogant doctor becomes a helpless patient. William Hurt's performance cuts the fine line between villain and hero.

**Eat Drink Man Woman**—The characterization of the food in this sensually pleasing Chinese film almost upstages the characterization of the people! A chef who's a widower tangles with his three grown daughters. A treat.

**Eboli**—A richly detailed, slow-paced Italian film about the forsakeness a political prisoner experiences in southern Italy during Mussolini's war against Abyssinia. Probes depths of feeling but seems stacked ideologically.

**11 Harrowhouse**—A witty, all-star who's-who and who-has-whom in this daring diamond caper with Candice Bergen, John Gielgud, Trevor Howard, and James Mason, with Charles Grodin as the amusing star-narrator. Good pacing and excellent acting.

**Empire of the Sun**—A lavish, energetic epic. Episodic account of the experiences of an 11-year-old British boy who spends three years in a Japanese prison camp during World War II. In some ways, absolutely breathtaking; in other ways, totally exhausting. A worthy effort.

**Equus**—Flawed film version of Peter Shaffer's play about a troubled young boy and his tormented psychiatrist (Richard Burton). Dark and violent, Shaffer exhibits once again his unusual mix of soul and spirit.

**The European**—Elaborate New England foliage and manners grace this tale of Henry James. It feels trivial and profound simultaneously. Highly stylized.

**Eye of the Needle**—A lavish thriller about a spy with a message for Hitler and the woman who becomes his obstacle. Donald Sutherland and Kate Nelligan shine.

**The Falcon and the Snowman**—Based on the true story of two unlikely friends who end up selling secrets to the Soviets, John Schlesinger's film delights more than it satisfies.

**The Fan**—An actress (Lauren Bacall) is terrorized by a young fan who has an obsessive crush on her. Effective thriller which raises questions about the star system.

**Farewell, My Lovely**—Robert Mitchum and Charlotte Rampling are featured in this expensive looking remake of Raymond Chandler's private eye. Strong acting with vivid atmosphere, but lacks unity.

**Fat Man and Little Boy**—Hey, it's not profound. One expects more of director Roland Joffe. But this exploration of the tensions, relationships, and feelings of the team heading up the Manhattan Project, building the first atomic bombs, is quietly effective.

**Father of the Bride**—A pleasant diversion, a cup of tea with wedding cake. A father is traumatized when he learns his precious daughter is getting married. Comic and warm.

**Ferris Bueller's Day Off**—Writer-director John Hughes spins out a delightful fantasy about a high school senior's perfect day of playing hooky. Of course, to enjoy it, one must understand how truly smart seniors can be. A lark.

**Field of Honor**—A young man from a peasant family sells himself into military service. Lush photography, impressionistic cinematography. A sobering tale about the desolation of war. In French and Alsatian.

**The Final Countdown**—An ingenious and effective story of a present-day aircraft carrier carried back 40 years in time by a time warp. They have to decide whether to permit the Japanese to bomb Pearl Harbor! Quite enjoyable. Kirk Douglas, Martin Sheen, and Katharine Ross.

**Fiorile**—Is cowardice heredity? Do some families always choose personal advantage over sacrifice for others? This Italian film etches a multi-generational saga with poignant if inconsistent strokes.

**Fire with Fire**—A sultry "Romeo and Juliet" between a pretty girl from a Catholic boarding school and a sensitive tough from a reformatory school. Not bad.

**The Firm**—Gripping tale of a young lawyer who joins a prestigious firm, only to discover a smell of criminal involvements. Lacks the profound nuance to make it a classic.

**First Love**—Sorta lyrical and exquisite. Love story about a boy who meets a girl (who happens to be the mistress of an older man). Uh-huh. Good acting by Susan Dey.

**Five Days One Summer**—Master filmmaker Fred Zinnemann fails to fire the soul of this story, but several of the scenes and the absolutely dazzling photography of mountain climbing do come off excellently. Sean Connery and Betsy Brantley portray a doctor who runs off to the Alps with his niece whom he loves.

**Flatliners**—An unsettling story about a group of med students who want to find out what's on the other side of death. They decide to experiment with death and resuscitation. Orthodox twists.

**The Fog**—An unscary yarn about fog enacting a hundred-year-old revenge on a coastal town. Yawn.

**Forrest Gump**—Hard to say. Is this a delightful, profound story about an innocent man who is unimpressed by the moments in recent decades which capture the media and the masses? Or is it

a wandering offbeat yarn about a silly fantasy? In any case, it gets you involved.

**Fort Apache: The Bronx**—Paul Newman as a South Bronx policeman, trying to hang on to his integrity and memories in an atmosphere of violence.

**The Fourth Protocol**—An espionage thriller about a British agent (Michael Caine) trying to track down KGB agents who are bent on setting off a small atomic bomb to sabotage NATO.

**Funny Lady**—Surprisingly well done. Technically sophisticated, it is more than a Streisand showcase. The Fanny Brice story is undoubtedly in Barbra's hand, but she's balanced off with a good acting job by James Caan as Billy Rose. It's big and it's too long, but it's full of style. Good camera work.

**Get Out Your Handkerchiefs**—A French comedy about a beautiful but listless wife whom no one can cheer up. Zany and farfetched, but witty and delightful.

**Ghostbusters**—Delightful spoof of horror films by some of the old pros from "Saturday Night Live"—Bill Murray and Dan Aykroyd. Three defrocked professors catch ghosts and save the world. Hilarious.

**Ghost Story**—A stylish horror film about four old men and a secret they share which comes back to haunt them. Stars John Houseman, Melvyn Douglas, and Fred Astaire.

**Girl Friends**—A look at womanhood with a touch of feminism. Strong story and acting. Thoughtful.

**A Girl from Hunan**—The first Chinese movie to be commercially released in the United States. An unmarried 16-year-old breaks the law of her clan by becoming accidentally pregnant. Exquisite photography of Chinese countryside.

**Glengarry Glen Ross**—Top-flight cast, cramped into a real estate office, devour each other as sales suffer. Seems like a filmed play. Excellent script marred by constant overdose of profanity.

**Gloria**—A wacky John Cassavetes action film about a woman who suddenly has to protect a six-year-old Puerto Rican boy from the mob. And is she ever full of surprises! Poignant by spells.

**The Good Father**—Anthony Hopkins excels as an angry English husband who turns his bitterness toward women into clever revenge against another man's wife. Hate and deception of the self.

**Gorillas in the Mist**—Zeal turns a pioneering idealist into an inhuman tyrant. Yet she saves the animals! Based on a true story, Sigourney Weaver hands in a *tour de force* as the primatologist who went to Africa in 1967 to save gorillas from poachers.



**Gorky Park**—If you didn't read the book, you'll like it better. Complicated plot leaves too many gaps in film version. Strong action, tone, movement, however. Story of a good detective in Moscow, sorting out three murders.

**The Great Muppet Caper**—An improvement, but somehow it lacks the zip and poignancy of the TV show. The bear and the frog investigate a crime with the help of the pig.

**The Great Santini**—A virtuoso performance by Robert Duvall as an unorthodox Marine Corps father who bulldogs his way through everything. Grows on you.

**Grumpy Old Men**—Enjoyable, in spite of formula overtaking story. Two old friends/enemies find various ways (mostly childish) to prove they're still alive—and cranky. Some great moments.

**Hardcore**—A searing encounter between a fundamentalist, moralist father and a daughter caught in the hell of urban pornography. Graphic and excessive in its realism. George C. Scott hands in an unusual performance. Very unsettling. Somehow seems unfair.

**Heart in Winter (Un Coeur en Hiver)**—An unresolving magnetism between three persons: a beautiful violinist and the two men in her world. More about "might" than "did."

**Herbie Goes to Monte Carlo**—Another wacky tale about Herbie the VW bug. Not as funny as some earlier ones, but entertaining nonetheless. This time it's the races and falling hopelessly in love with another car.

**Herbie Rides Again**—A cute little picture the whole family will enjoy. Take the kids; don't send them. An interesting Disney sequel to *The Lovebug*, starring Herbie the VW, with Keenan Wynn as the nasty land developer who tries to harass grandmotherly Helen Hayes out of her home. Herbie aided by dozens of VW friends saves the day.

**Heroes**—Henry Winkler and Sally Field in an uneven tale about a Vietnam vet and a girl he meets.

**Hester Street**—What happens when a strongly fortified subculture is assimilated into a larger "foreign" culture? A heavy subject treated with a light hand in this story of Jews in New York that becomes more engrossing as it unwinds.

**High Hopes**—An eccentric English film about eccentric souls who must endure Margaret Thatcher's iron fist hell. Wildly funny at spots, heavily politicized and uneven. Warm heart under all that grimness, though.

**Home Alone 2: Alone in New York**—Certainly not original, but fun enough. A boy gets separat-

ed from his family at the airport, plays clever tricks, and hands out justice to some robbers.

**Homicide**—A dark, almost claustrophobic, portrait of a homicide detective who's set on walking a clean line until he bumps up against the problem of identity. As a non-practicing Jew, he is drawn into the investigation of an elderly Jewish woman. Superb pace.

**Honey, I Shrunk the Kids**—A funny intersection of the mad scientist and the mad parent. Kids are accidentally shrunk to teeny-tiny size and can barely navigate their own backyard. Hilarious.

**Hooper**—A sensitive story of a top Hollywood stuntman growing old. Burt Reynolds and Sally Fields. Poignant.

**Hope and Glory**—A sensitive, joyous slice of life, set in London during the Blitz. A young seven-year-old boy finds glorious adventure in the danger, a playground in the bombed ruins. The delightful episodes never quite hold together, however.

**Housesitter**—A satisfying comedy. A woman with nothing to lose who moves into the vacant house of a man with everything to lose.

**Husbands and Wives**—A series of highly original scenes laced together into a slow, meandering tapestry. Woody Allen explores marriage and relationships. Not his best; not his worst.

**I Married a Shadow**—Entertaining but rather shallow film about a mother who has an opportunity to take on another woman's identity. Nathalie Baye is superb.

**Inside Moves**—An interesting character portrait of a variety of losers who relate to a winner. Touching and well acted. John Savage is superb.

**Invasion of the Body Snatchers**—A scary sci-fi about pods from outer space which replace people while they sleep, resulting in a feelingless world. Great camera effects with strong acting by Donald Sutherland, Veronica Cartwright, and others.

**Iron Will**—Yes, you know the boy will win the grueling 1917 500-mile dogsled race. True, it's old-fashioned with a big heart. But the predictability has a fresh crispness to it which energizes this riveting tale.

**The January Man**—An offbeat thriller about an unconventional cop on the trail of a serial killer in Manhattan. Flawed by clumsy development of secondary characters.

**Joshua Then and Now**—Zany look at the life of a Jewish writer. Alan Arkin is delightful.

**Jungle Fever**—An upwardly mobile black architect from Harlem falls for a poor white Italian secretary from Bensonhurst. Is it love or curiosity? Can anything overcome color? Engaging.

**Jury of One**—A curious story of a mother, played by Sophia Loren, unable to let her teenage son become independent. Her attempts to free him from criminal charges backfire.

**Just Between Friends**—Wife makes friend; friend turns out to be mistress of husband; wife doesn't know. Good. But not outstanding.

**Karate Kid II**—A bit sudsy and predictable. Yet it's fascinating that a tale about a teenager and an older man, both slight of build and gentle in manner, outgrosses *Cobra*! Has a nice touch.

**King Kong**—If you forget the overkill ad campaign, and if you never saw the original, it's not all that bad a picture. Classic struggle of the beauty and the beast. A giant ape, captured on a sea island, is brought to America as a big commercial rip-off. The ape rips off a little bit of the Big Apple. For fun or philosophizing.

**La Bamba**—Engaging. True story of Ritchie Valens, a teenage Chicano pop singer who died in a plane crash (with Buddy Holly) soon after achieving national stardom. Melodramatic at times, but worthwhile.

**L'Adolescence**—A French film about a young girl growing up on the eve of World War II. Misty and French-paced, but strong in certain characterizations.

**La Passante**—A troubling French film about another victim of World War II. A story within a story unveils the cruel world of a young Jewish boy who lost two sets of parents in the brutality fostered by the war.

**La Rapture**—A puzzling piece about love and possessing another person, and the nature of reality by French director, Chabrol. Troubling and complex.

**The Last Emperor**—An exotic, "historical" epic about the bizarre life of Pu Yi, the last Chinese emperor who reigned in the Forbidden City after China became a republic. Lavish sets and sensuous spectacle surround a rather wooden story line. Remarkable cinema, nonetheless.

**The Last Married Couple**—George Segal and Natalie Wood play a basically content couple whose friends are all splitting. They become overwhelmed with the pressure and split too, only to learn more about their relationship. Funny and articulate, but only mildly realistic.

**The Last Tycoon**—In spite of a masterful performance by Robert De Niro in the lead role, this movie version of F. Scott Fitzgerald's book is an honest, flawed failure. Many of the elements excel, but the whole lacks unity and life. About a big Hollywood producer of days gone by.

**A League of Their Own**—A highly enjoyable, very amiable story set during the first season of



the All American Girls Professional Baseball League.

**Leap of Faith**—A con man gathers a traveling troupe and hits the hi-tech sawdust trail, faking miracles for the faithful. But not everyone is deceived, and grace even visits the false messenger.

**Le Beau Mariage**—A young woman who's been living with a married painter leaves him and announces that she's going to get married. She has no one in mind. This French film by Rohmer details her search in characterizations which linger.

**Legal Eagles**—A light-hearted mystery-thriller starring Robert Redford and Debra Winger. Two lawyers first oppose each other; then join hands. Strong at times; disappointing at others.

**L'etoile du Nord**—Simone Signoret and Phillippe Norret star in this French tale about a murder on a train. Pace drags but the masterful acting helps.

**Let's Do It Again**—Another very funny romp with Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier as two blundering con men. An unusual example of the emerging maturity of black films.

**Letter to Brezhnev**—A working-class girl meets a Soviet sailor, knowing their time together is short. She feels trapped. Effective.

**Lily in Love**—Famous Writer turns out a script for someone other than her Famous Actor husband to star in. The plot that results reveals lots about love. Fine acting by Maggie Smith and Christopher Plummer.

**Lion of the Desert**—Anthony Quinn leads a make-shift legion of bedouin patriots against the Italian army. Strong performances and gorgeous photography. Compromised by tag-line sponsorship.

**Lipstick**—A harsh look at rape and the equally cruel court trials which often follow when a woman dares to press charges. A grueling film.

**Little Man Tate**—A charming tale of a seven-year-old prodigy whose life is only partly brightened by his reliable waitress mother. Enter a cold, brainy child psychologist, herself a genius. Poor boy. Delightful.

**A Little Romance**—Two eggheaded adolescents romance each other in Europe. Its cleverness eventually adds up to little despite Sir Laurence Olivier's efforts.

**The Longest Yard**—Burt Reynolds can act! It's hard to believe that this male Raquel has it in him—but convict, football player, big mouth, and all—here he is in a strong allegory of life, a bit obvious but noteworthy nonetheless.

**Look Who's Talking**—A surprising, funny, cute, entertaining, though improbable, tale (look, who cares?) about an unmarried accountant who gives birth to Mikey. Her search for a babysitter and her encounters with a taxi driver add to the humor—and the charm.

**A Love in Germany**—A rather steamy portrait of a woman who runs a grocery while her husband's a soldier in World War II. She falls in passionate love with a Polish prisoner of war. In German.

**Love on the Run**—A major disappointment. Truffaut's fifth film about his alter ego, Antoine Doinel, and his shallow, selfish pursuit of himself. Leaves one with a sour, empty taste. Lacks genius.

**MacArthur**—If you enjoy studying history, personalities, and war, you'll love it. Gregory Peck is magnificent. And yet, the film lacks soul and unity somehow. Tells the story of the General.

**Madame Rosa**—Only Jewish politics could have given this French film an Oscar. An aging former prostitute, survivor of Auschwitz, runs a "day-care center" for the children of prostitutes. One child named Momo, an Arab, develops a special relationship with Madame Rosa. The film is sensitive and moving but a bit sentimental and by no means a masterpiece. Stars Simone Signoret.

**A Man and A Woman: 20 Years Later**—Claude Lelouch returns to his love classic with the original cast and crew, twenty years later. A movie producer and a race-car driver. In French.

**The Man Who Loved Women**—A major disappointment. French filmmaker Truffaut stumbles over this shallow yarn about a womanizer.

**The Man Without a Face**—A reclusive with a disfigured face comes out of his isolation and pain to befriend a boy he tutors one summer on an island off Maine. Tender.

**The Manhattan Project**—An involving story about a high school student who creates his own atomic bomb to make a point. Well acted.

**Matewan**—Beautiful cinematography, strong faces, and a 1920's coal-miners' strike in West Virginia. Thoughtful.

**Maxie**—A Glenn Close showcase in a plot more weird-sounding than the outcome that materializes. What if those who die young could return to earth and pursue their goals in someone else's body? Maxie, an aspiring actress, tries.

**Memphis Belle**—Captures the pain and exhilaration of war. The 25th and final flight of a B-17 crew in 1943, told from the close-up point-of-view of the 10 young men.

**Middle Age Crazy**—Bruce Dern portrays a successful contractor and family man who flips out when he turns 40. Ann-Margaret becomes angry with his Porsche, jeans, and Dallas Cowgirl affair. Story falls apart in the end. Too bad.

**Midnight Run**—Charles Grodin's best role as a Mafia accountant who has ripped off \$15 million and then jumped bail. Robert De Niro portrays the bounty hunter, seeking justice and a fee.

**A Midsummer Night's Sex Comedy**—Set aside your high expectations of Woody Allen and you'll find here a small, somewhat pretentious, but nonetheless engaging, farce about innocence and lust.

**Milk and Honey**—A poor Jamaican woman (superb performance by Josette Simon) moves to Canada as a nanny. When she later has her son join illegally, the principal of the school, with mixed motives, helps her. Poignant.

**The Miracle**—An attractive offbeat picture about two bored but bright teenagers during summer vacation. She slowly falls for him, but he falls for a new beautiful mystery woman who suddenly appears in the town. Delicious but thoughtful.

**Misery**—A fascinating thriller with a scary edge about a famous romance writer who becomes the hostage (literally) of his biggest fan.

**Mo' Better Blues**—A flawed picture by Spike Lee about a flawed, selfish jazz player, played flawlessly by Denzel Washington. Movement is slow, development is over-long, and the ending totally undercuts the rest of the movie. Yet one senses a master at work.

**Monty Python and the Holy Grail**—Distilled British wit. Rich in put-downs, understatement, and overstatement, the Python gang destroys most everything that takes itself too seriously! Watch out, King Arthur and all ye knights who died so gallantly. You're in trouble if you expect any reflective moments.

**Moonlighting**—A tense, humorous story about four Polish workmen who sneak into London to fix up the flat of a beauty wealthy friend. Becomes allegorical.

**Mortal Thoughts**—A murder mystery slowly unravels after the malicious husband of a beauty parlor operator ends up dead.

**Movie Movie**—Two films in one, the first black and white, the second color, with overlapping casts. The first parodies the up-from-rags boxing picture; the other, the magic of the hard-times Broadway musical. With Mel Brooks it would have been outrageous; with Woody Allen it would have been thoughtfully witty, but it seems like TV comedy. George C. Scott and others.

**Mr. & Mrs. Bridge**—An old-style lawyer (Paul Newman), who's never learned to express his feelings (Kansas City, 1930s) contends with his wife (Joanne Woodward), who's discovering modern thoughts and freedoms.



**Mr. Mom**—An amusing film about a husband who swaps roles with his wife. Too heavy-handed to be witty, but quite entertaining nonetheless.

**Mr. Saturday Night**—Billy Crystal stars as a failed, aging comic whose wish to be the clown wrecked most of his real-life relationships. Funny, in spite of the schmaltz.

**The Muppet Movie**—The wonderful TV show can't stretch to movie length and keep either the kids or the adults. Unfortunate. Quite funny by spots. Kermit the Frog goes to Hollywood. Cameos by many famous stars.

**My Dinner With Andre**—If you like bull sessions and interesting stories, you may find this table conversation between a playwright-actor and an avant-garde theater director your cup of tea. Certainly one of the finest films in years which consists of one conversation. A bit boring for average theatergoers.

**My Girl**—A tender, offbeat story of the 11-year-old daughter of a mortician, growing up. The tear-jerking ending is a bit contrived.

**My New Partner**—Of course, the rookie idealist cop gets assigned to the compromised veteran policeman. What more do you need for a good romp but a tight script and fine acting? It's all here (in French)!

**The Name of the Rose**—A missed opportunity. The clash of reason and mystery in a 14th-century Italian monastery gets bogged down in the tangle of murder and heresy. Mushy writing. Strong acting. Unclear ending.

**Network**—A scathing attack on television, its basic premises, and network news. Paddy Chayefsky uses his screenwriter's pen to carve out a cutting, sometimes bitter, and almost hysterical indictment of the unprincipled tube. He overdoes it a bit. The story becomes a sermon. The acting by Peter Finch, Faye Dunaway, Robert Duvall, and William Holden is excellent. But why preach when you can tell a story?

**Nighthawks**—Two New York cops try to outwit a brilliant international terrorist. Grips, slips, and glides. Sylvester Stallone and Billy Dee Williams.

**Nine to Five**—A surprise. Jane Fonda, Lily Tomlin, and Dolly Parton lead the office revolt. Better than slapstick and not as heavy-handed cause-wise as expected. Really funny.

**North Dallas Forty**—In spite of its potboiler atmosphere, this look at the underside of football turns poignant and powerful at spots. Seesaws between sensitivity and melodrama.

**No Time for Breakfast**—Based on a true story about a busy woman physician who neglects her family and her guilt—and then her cancer. A bit forced, but tender.

**Oblomov**—A gem of a picture, slow and tedious at first, but haunting in the end. A 19th-century Russian landowner spends most of his time in bed.

**Obsession**—The promise of a finely tuned plot goes mud and muddle at the end. Cliff Robertson is a superb actor, convincing in his conviction that his murdered wife has reappeared. The story builds well but finally asks you to believe too much about who was in cahoots with whom.

**Octopussy**—James Bond delivers. What else is there to say? If you like Bond, this is as good as any recent Bond film. If you don't, you won't. No need to mention the plot. The witty, sexy hero singlehandedly saves the universe. Like usual.

**Off Beat**—Funny and poignant. A librarian falls for a lady cop and poses as a fellow officer to win her affections.

**The Onion Field**—A sometimes taut tale about the death of a policeman, criminal justice, and its failures. Wavers between potboiler and profound.

**The Other Side of the Mountain—Part II**—Sentiment and melodrama aside, this picture continues much the original began. A crippled girl fights the odds and falls in love.

**Pacific Heights**—A tenant who appears to be a good risk turns out to be a menace. Delightfully frightening.

**The Paper Chase**—The setting is Harvard Law School and Timothy Bottoms is the student who hates the professor and loves his daughter. John Houseman certainly deserves the Oscar (which he won for Best Supporting Actor) for his acting debut as the professor.

**Pauline at the Beach**—Six characters in search of a beach talk their heads off and then do exactly the opposite of what they espoused. Funny, French, beautiful, and tiresome. And, oh yes, sorta thoughtful ala Rohmer.

**Peggy Sue Got Married**—A serious but gimmicky use of time warp to juxtapose two different eras. A middle-aged woman faints and time-travels back to 1960 when she was a senior. Funny, even profound, by turns. Is love really stronger than knowledge?

**The Pelican Brief**—A very effective thriller about a law student who figures out who schemed the assassination of two Supreme Court justices. Riveting, delicious story. Unfortunately, it lacks character and depth. Great sport; shallow aftertaste.

**Pelle the Conqueror**—Etching itself like a powerful woodcut on one's mind, the film (in Swedish and Danish) explores the rough life a father and son lead at the turn of the century at Stone Farm. Precise, yet somehow cold.

**A Perfect Couple**—Another disappointment from America's greatest filmmaker. This time Altman uses a dating service to pair up a withdrawn middle-aged Greek and a timid rock singer. Has a lot going which never comes together.

**Peter's Friends**—Six English friends unite for a weekend 10 years after graduation. Comic and tender.

**The Phantom of Paradise**—Revenge and bitterness take over the hard rock world. The story is on to something deeply human but never quite gets its wallop packed. It's surreal and real all at once, with moments of true suspense. An ambiguous ending.

**Posse**—A classic Western about sharpshooting black outlaws who ride west to settle a score. Well crafted.

**Presumed Innocent**—A gripping drama starring Harrison Ford as the deputy prosecutor, investigating the murder of a beautiful fellow prosecutor. Add a dash of politics and manipulation. Relentless and without grace, yet superb in its own way.

**Pretty in Pink**—Attractive film by John Hughes about two teens from opposite sides of the tracks. Molly Ringwald is strong as the spunky Andie.

**The Princess Bride**—A romping swashbuckler comedy about two lovers overcoming all odds to find true happiness. Truly delightful.

**Project X**—A tender tale about a chimpanzee who's bright enough to learn sign language and nuclear destruction. A mite melodramatic.

**Pulp Fiction**—Excessively violent. Viewer remains confused for most of the film. Three overlapping stories leapfrog through past and present in this portrait of gangster attitudes and behaviors. Very original film; powerfully constructed—if the viewer can stomach it.

**Quest for Fire**—Original. A very different sort of film, exploring life on earth 80,000 years ago, caught in the beauty and brutality of evolutionary change. Clever, awesome, and exciting.

**Rafferty and the Gold Dust Twins**—Although not much really happens, these three rootless "orphans" who bump into each other will captivate you. Good characterizations from Alan Arkin, Sally Kellerman, and Mackenzie Phillips.

**Report to the Commissioner**—Another sensitized cop story, this one with a good deal of pathos. But it turns to soap in the end, unfortunately. Michael Moriarty is convincing.

**Return of the Jedi**—Why does this seem like the same old thing? Captivates young kids, but the adults can forget it. Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher, and Mark Hamill aren't actors; they're servants of George Lucas' special effects,



which are dazzling by spells. Ingenious, nonetheless.

**Reuben, Reuben**—Outstanding performance by Tom Conti as a poet on the edge of things.

**Rich Kids**—Parents can't avoid involvement with this mistitled film about kids facing their parents' divorces. A bit stagey, simplistic, and overdrawn, but with a biting freshness. Worth the time, if you're willing to be frank.

**A River Runs Through It**—A poignant, glimmering memory of two brothers in Montana in the early part of this century. A bit too much glimmering and too little drama, but worthwhile nonetheless.

**The Road Warrior**—A grim tale of survival set in the wild and savage future.

**Robin and Marian**—Slowly paced, this story of an aging Robin Hood and Maid Marian grows in spirit as it goes along. The ending is startling, but poetically it fits.

**Robin Hood: The Prince of Thieves**—An elegant, raucous, fairly violent version of the old legend with a modern turn.

**Rudy**—An affectionate story about a young man who wants with all his being to play football for Notre Dame.

**Runaway Train**—A hardboiled but compelling saga about escaped convicts on a train out of control. Jon Voight's outstanding.

**Running**—Michael Douglas stars as a failed adult who finally finds himself through running. It's a fairy tale to be sure, but it sorta gets you in your throat if you've ever faced failure.

**Russian Roulette**—George Segal plays a hassled Canadian cop in this tale of an attempt to kill Kosygin. Thickly layered, it works rather well, but lacks verve.

**Save the Tiger**—A garment manufacturer caught between arson and bankruptcy etches out a pathetic but realistic characterization (played superbly by Jack Lemmon—Best Actor of the Year). Good script and strong supporting cast.

**Scene of the Crime**—A French psychological thriller which becomes increasingly sinister. A teenage troublemaker involves his family members in a web of violence. Not fully effective.

**Searching for Bobby Fischer**—A very unusual true-life story about a seven-year-old chess whiz. A look at competition and the world beyond competition.

**A Second Chance**—A little farfetched, but interesting nonetheless. Claude Lelouche's story (French) of a woman who meets her son after 16 years in prison.

**See No Evil, Hear No Evil**—Richard Pryor and Gene Wilder team up as a blind man who meets a deaf man and they get into trouble together. Funny adventure story which doesn't patronize. The goods guys win, of course.

**The Seven-Per-Cent Solution**—Nicol Williamson plays Sherlock Holmes, Alan Arkin is Sigmund Freud, Robert Duvall portrays Dr. Watson, and Laurence Olivier is Professor Moriarty. All of which sounds like high drama when Vanessa Redgrave is kidnapped. And so it is—witty, super stylistic, and basically enjoyable.

**Shame**—A pretty lawyer motorcycles into a desolate Australian town and tackles the brutal sexual treatment of the women by the men.

**Shirley Valentine**—One of the more enjoyable character studies of the year. A middle-aged wife wonders where the young woman in her has gone. Is her life over? She goes to Greece with a female friend, and things will never be the same. Very slow beginning.

**The Silence of the Lambs**—Not for most. A graphic, menacing portrait of a young female FBI trainee interviewing a sinister serial killer. Movie is well done, but material is shocking.

**Silent Fall**—Two psychiatrists battle over a young, withdrawn silent boy who may have information the police think they need. Fairly involving.

**The Silent Partner**—A fun bank bust with Elliot Gould going almost innocently along. One putridly violent scene, however, almost destroys this otherwise clever yarn.

**Sixteen Candles**—Crude but tender high-school-dating yarn. Better than most in its sensitivity.

**Slapshot**—A gutsy small-town picture filmed in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. Paul Newman etches out a top-rate performance as the captain of a dying minor league ice hockey team, fighting economic death and coming age. Fast paced, crude, and violent—but full of pathos. Uses sport as life.

**Sleeping with the Enemy**—An engaging thriller about a young wife who, abused by her husband, stages her own death to escape. She begins a new, wonderful life far away. Problem: husbands can travel.

**The Slingshot**—A likeable study of a 12-year-old boy growing up in Stockholm in the 1920s, inspired by and confused by his Swedish socialist father and his Russian Jewish mother. In Swedish.

**The Slipper and the Rose**—Musical version of Cinderella should be enjoyed by the whole family. Music and action quite good for genre.

**Smooth Talk**—A restless 15-year-old who looks for friendship in the wrong places. Boredom turns to fear. Growing up fast.

**Some Kind of Hero**—Richard Pryor stars in this story of a Vietnam veteran who returns to a difficult life. Pryor is so superb at both humor and pathos that the director can't decide how to guide him.

**Splash**—Funny romantic comedy about a lovely mermaid who lands at the Statue of Liberty and the young man who falls in love with her.

**Squanto: A Warrior's Tale**—Engaging story of the true-life Native American who negotiated peace between the first settlers and indigenous tribes.

**Stanley and Iris**—A disappointment. Martin Ritt directing Jane Fonda and Robert De Niro should be a winning combination, but it's slow, old-fashioned, and stiff. A young widow helps a man who can't read. Moving at times.

**Star Wars**—A sci-fi achievement. Children love it. However, beneath the spectacular effects, the film runs more shallow than it pretends.

**Stavisky**—Oh, the corruption of the upper class. Story of a powerful ne'er-do-well in France in the '30s, embroidered with lovely costumes and rich settings. Skillfully told.

**The Stepford Wives**—Watch out! Here's a thriller with little blood because a lot of the characters aren't human. See if you know who. Katherine Ross and Paula Prentiss do splendidly.

**Stevie**—A very slow poetic film about the life of British poetess Margaret Smith. Stars Glenda Jackson. Touching, if you're still awake.

**Sugar Hill**—An above average story about two brothers in Harlem, born to drugs, now lords themselves. One wants out, the other smells the big deal. Lacks epic dimensions. Thoughtful and engaging.

**Superman**—A bigger than life picture about the do-gooder Man of Steel. Fantastic, surprising, and unreasonable. Special effects are especially well done. Faith implications are murky. More like whipped cream than cake.

**The Sure Thing**—An enjoyable romantic comedy about two college students who hitchhike to California to meet their respective lovers. Charming and loving.

**Suspect**—An entertaining, if somewhat implausible, thriller about a Washington public defender who defends a homeless Vietnam vet. Cher develops the lead character with great range and depth.

**The Tamarind Seed**—Julie Andrews, in a straight role, pairs off with Omar Sharif in a surprisingly fresh romance/intrigue. It gets complicated—the romance blossoms and the intrigue deepens. Both Andrews and Sharif will startle skeptics with their well honed performances.



**Teachers**—Oh, so teachy. Arthur Hiller tries to teach us what's wrong with public education in this spunky muckraking tale of life at John F. Kennedy High School. He succeeds in a heavy-handed sort of fashion.

**That Obscure Object of Desire**—Master emeritus Bunuel at play. An aging man becomes absolutely obsessed with a young woman. It's not his best, but the touch of Bunuel is unmistakable.

**Terms of Endearment**—Apart from the hard-to-take ending and the shallow characterizations of the two implausible husbands, this tale of a mother and her daughter disappoints. Very uneven in its skill. Shirley MacLaine and Debra Winger are tops, but the script is B-grade.

**3 Men and a Cradle**—Three women-chasing French men end up in charge of a precious little baby, unexpectedly. Funny, especially for women. Could have been stronger. French.

**The Three Musketeers**—A surprise, full of rollicking fun. Innocently ridiculous. Strong performances by Michael York and Raquel Welch with Faye Dunaway, Richard Chamberlain, and Charlton Heston. Good for the whole family.

**Throw Momma from the Train**—An off-the-wall black comedy that's not as cruel as it sounds at first—well, not quite. A teacher and a student try to assist each other in getting rid of someone in each of their lives. Very funny.

**Thunderheart**—An FBI agent goes to a South Dakota reservation to investigate a tribal murder and has to face his own identity. Involving, but lacks scope and dimension.

**Tightrope**—No, this is not the usual Clint Eastwood flick. It's a rather raw, bleak study of a detective pursuing the killer of prostitutes, all the while struggling with his own dark turmoil.

**Tim**—A handsome young man who is a slow learner faces new friendships and severe crises. A bit soapy.

**Time Stands Still**—A Hungarian film about the generation following the revolution with all of its troubles, caught between paranoid memories, drunken parties, and yearnings.

**To Be or Not To Be**—Mel Brooks and Anne Bancroft in a farce about a theater troupe in occupied Warsaw. Trying to outwit the Nazis. Hilarious.

**To Sleep with Anger**—A storyteller and trickster arrives at the doorstep of his old friend. Havoc slowly unfolds. Delicately profound.

**Top Gun**—Truly exhilarating photography of fighter planes in maneuver. Flag-waving story about the training of the U.S. Navy's best fighter

pilots. Hotshot learns to be a team player. Also falls in love with a sexy instructor (Kelly McGillis).

**A Touch of Class**—Glenda Jackson's Oscar-winning performance as the divorced business woman treats us to the same elegance, craft, and class Jackson fans expect. George Segal is superb in a witty brisk script about a stylish affair in London. Lacks depth.

**The Towering Inferno**—Far better than *Airport 1975* but not as good as *Juggernaut* or *Pelham*, this "disaster" film features fire in a skyscraper with strong performances by Paul Newman and Steve McQueen and the best special effects of the year. Too much assembly-line feeling.

**Troop Beverly Hills**—Not as bad as it sounds. A spoiled rich woman tries to lead a bunch of spoiled rich girls into becoming Wilderness Girls. Funny by spells.

**The Unbearable Lightness of Being**—An uneven study of the revolution, both political and sexual, in Prague in 1968. A thoughtful brain surgeon chases skirts and tries to avoid politics, constantly interrogating himself.

**Under Fire**—Strong possibilities sadly disappoint. American journalists in a Central American country face ethical questions similar to those faced by their own government. Mixed bag of electrifying action, strong performances, and implausible decisions.

**Unforgiven**—A classic Western odyssey, creating a myth by trying to destroy other myths about the old West. Clint Eastwood's excellent as actor and director. An attempt at realism.

**Uptown Saturday Night**—The all-star black comedy about Bill Cosby and Sidney Poitier trying to rescue a lost \$50,000 lottery ticket makes an entertaining picture. Add Harry Belafonte, Richard Pryor, and Flip Wilson and you'll get uptown any night.

**Urban Cowboy**—A Texas version of *Midnight Cowboy*? Has great moments, but somehow full of holes. Small-town boy arrives in the big city, marries too quickly, competes in a modernized toy rodeo, and almost comes apart. John Travolta stars.

**Victory**—An upbeat formula picture: a humane Nazi in World War II paves the way for Allied prisoners of war to beat the tar out of a Nazi soccer team. Fun as an escape.

**Violets Are Blue**—A bittersweet yarn about a globe-trotting photographer and her high school flame, now a small-town editor back home.

**Voyage of the Damned**—Mennonites should especially enjoy this historically true shipload of Jews escaping Germany in the early '40s, only to be turned away from their destination. Slow-

paced and a bit far-flung, the story grips tight the sense of peoplehood. Oskar Werner stands out in an all-star cast.

**Wall Street**—A forceful melodrama about corruption among the zealous stockbrokers. Fine acting and terse script do not eliminate the sense of being manipulated as a viewer. Somehow it's too slick, too contrived. But it's very riveting, nonetheless.

**The Way We Were**—Barbra Streisand's first strong dramatic role as a brash Jewish radical sparring with the rich handsome WASP ala Robert Redford. Mostly lots of fun. Another pitch for the nostalgic market.

**What's Love Got to Do with It**—This portrait of a singer's rise to fame, with all the sadness and violence, represents an unusually involving biographical film, based on the story of Tina Turner.

**Where the Green Ants Dream**—Werner Herzog's saga, in English, about a white mining corporation determined to profiteer on the sacred grounds of aboriginals in south Australia. Interesting ideas, but less than dramatic.

**When a Man Loves a Woman**—Sincere, frank look at a young wife who succumbs to alcohol and her husband who's unable to help her. Strong dramatic beginning bogs down into counseling mode. Worthwhile and warmhearted.

**White Nights**—Superb dancing, so-so story, and international intrigue. A plane carrying a Russian dancer who defected to the U.S. is forced to land in Soviet territory.

**Widow's Peak**—Eccentric women in a gossipy British town. Plot seems hackneyed but acting has strong moments.

**Wish You Were Here**—An offbeat portrayal of a young girl growing up in a 1951 English coastal town. Full of mood.

**Without a Trace**—Kate Nelligan and Judd Hirsch star in a TV-style yarn about the mother of a kidnapped boy and the policeman in charge of the investigation. Lacks depth and breadth in spite of fine performances.

**The Wolf at the Door**—Artistically etched biography of artist Paul Gauguin. Donald Sutherland is tops.

**World of Desire**—An avant-garde fantasy of angels who long to be humans, set against the wistfulness of Berlin. Eccentric but involving. In German, English, and French.

**You Light Up My Life**—A delightful story of a young shy musician who falls in love with a director and they live happily—not quite. Didi Conn's acting is deft and subtle as the young girl whose father wants her to be a comic, but she loves to sing. Enchanting title song.

# FIVE

**About Last Night . . .**—A foul-mouthed study of male-female relationships; at times funny, at others tender, but too often banal.

**Above the Rim**—Good-hearted story! Inner-city basketball player torn between drugs/quick money and college.

**Across the Great Divide**—Has all the trappings of a nature picture, but turns out to be considerably more. Story of two children's adventure to Oregon. Plenty of animals and long scenic shots. Plot drags along, but at least there's a plot. Children should enjoy it.

**Against All Odds**—Unfairly cut from his team, a football player gets involved in tracking down a friend's girlfriend. Romance, betrayal, and corruption. Jeff Bridges and Rachel Ward.

**Airplane!**—An irreverent parody of *Airport* films, this loosely-connected sequence of one-liners, pans, and gags reminds one of *Saturday Night Live*. That's the trouble: it's too much like TV.

**Aliens**—There's a gleeful action to this stylish, sorta-scary science-fiction drama. Sigourney Weaver stars as the leader of a rescue squad sent to the alien-infested planet of Acheron.

**Animal House**—Intended to be college-age humor, this film about college life in the early '60s succeeds in some uproariously funny scenes mixed with a lot that are off-color, tasteless, and ineffective.

**Article 99**—A confrontation between doctors and administrators in a V.A. hospital. Hope never dies.

**Baby Boom**—Diane Keaton, in a switch, plays an efficient corporate type, only to have her life interrupted by a baby. With some funny and other painfully stereotypical vignettes, Keaton moves to Vermont and yuppies up her commercial instincts.

**Back to the Future**—A new problem! What to do if, by scientific accident, you are propelled back in time to the moment of your parents' first meeting—and what's worse—interrupt it? A cute dither of a picture.

**Back to School**—Not as trite and overbearing as one might expect of Rodney Dangerfield as a fast-talking, shrewd businessman. When he goes to visit his son in college, he enrolls himself! Fairly funny.

**The Bad News Bears**—Fine acting from Coach Walter Matthau and his motley crew of bad-mouthed loser Little Leaguers. Flimsy story.

**Beaches**—Sentimental and funny study of the friendship between two very different women, one a singer and the other a lawyer. Acting uneven and writing unfocused. Sorta irresistible though.

**Beyond the Limit**—Fractured beyond the limit by casting, this story about a doctor in Latin America who gets drawn into a political abduction loses both its subtlety and its spine. Captures the atmosphere of Graham Greene's book, but disappointingly misfires.

**Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure**—At first blush, another teen yarn about two high school dudes who hate school; a closer look reveals a romp through history thanks to a time machine. Not great, not bad.

**Black Rain**—A stylish high-tech thriller, smoldering with dark clichés and grim violence. Michael Douglas plays the New York detective who chases his prey to the baroque jungles of the Japanese underworld.

**Black Robe**—A Jesuit priest travels through what is now French Canada in 1634 to build a mission. Vividly directed by Bruce Beresford, but lacks the profound poignancy one might expect between faith and culture. (See page 55.)

**Black Windmill**—A Michael Caine picture (which is enough to turn most people either on or off. If off, forget it; if on, one of the best). Two boys are kidnapped, and the ransom is harsh. Intriguing with generally good editing and acting.

**Blaze**—Paul Newman portrays Earl K. Long, the flamboyant governor of Louisiana in the 1950s who falls for a stripper. Uneven.

**Blazing Saddles**—Mel Brooks' big rip-off of the Western, full of laughs and satire. Cleavon Little plays a black sheriff in a white town with the impossible Waco Kid, played superbly by Gene Wilder. Script lapses between wisecracks and wit. Brooks has a long way to go to equal Woody Allen's *Sleeper*.

**Bliss**—Wacky black comedy from Australia. An advertising executive, after being clinically dead, lives a new vision.

**Blow Out**—De Palma's thriller about a sound-effects man who accidentally records a political assassination. Tense, terse, and raw.

**Blue Chips**—Fast-paced, gritty drama about college basketball and a coach caught between dishonesty and victory.

**The Blue Lagoon**—Is this Romeo and Juliet in the jungle? Why the lack of story? And why is the love so sterile as to seem a curiosity? A boy and a girl, cousins, stranded on an island, function as brother and sister until they become lovers. Muted acting, unbelievable story, great photography.

**Bob Roberts**—A witty, biting portrait of a bigot who uses the techniques of the '60s and the themes of the '80s to run for the Senate. Openly biased. A pity. The story lacks depth because of the propaganda.

**Bobby Deerfield**—Race driver (Al Pacino) meets beautiful dying girl (Marthe Keller). The emotions and actions seem out of sync.

**The Bodyguard**—A highly paid security specialist signs on to guard a superstar singer. Love, caution, and danger. Partly entertaining, partly potboiler.

**Bonjour Amour**—A French film, spinning out its tale slowly, graphically, probes a studious boy's first love and rebellion.

**Boyfriends and Girlfriends**—Another pleasant Eric Rohmer romance, exploring the nature and etiquette of two women who meet two men.

**The Boys in Company C**—One of the current wave of Vietnam pictures, this yarn mashes through the exploits of the U.S. in Asia. In the end, however, parts are quite poignant.

**Brazil**—An offbeat experimental film which explodes before the viewer like an endless kaleidoscope. Innovative, but exhausting.

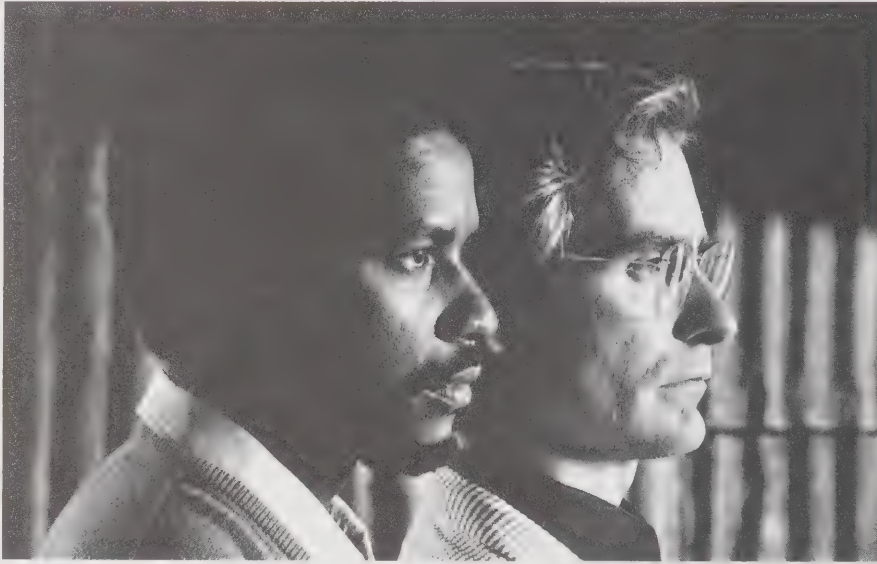
**Busting**—A flawed but intriguing look at police corruption. Fans of Elliot Gould and Robert Blake will love this vice squad team whose escapades are frustrated by bosses who are working for the local vice lord.

**Cadillac Man**—First part weak; second part masterful. Robin Williams stars as a car salesman with too many women and too many debts. When a jealous husband takes hostages, the salesman rises to the occasion.

**Carlito's Way**—Al Pacino stars as a smooth, swaggering crook who, just back from prison, says he's going straight but can't shake the habit. Stylish but shallow.

**The Changeling**—George C. Scott stars in this better than usual horror film about a murder from years ago haunting an old house, seeking justice.





**Cry Freedom**—There appear to be two quite different responses which one might register to the film *Cry Freedom*.

The first response is one of great disappointment. Director-producer Richard Attenborough gave us all a classic with his film *Gandhi* several years ago, and, even though that film had its flaws, this reviewer anticipated the release of *Cry Freedom* as a moment of inspired, incisive storytelling. Inspired it is not; incisiveness appears to be a gift Sir Richard either lost or never had.

The problem is that the viewer is led to assume that this is the story of a likable, dynamic black activist named Biko. The brutal oppression in South Africa is everywhere, and as we watch Biko exercise leadership with courage and humanity, we warm to this character. Our expectations rise. We anticipate confrontation and wonder how Biko will survive the treachery around him.

Then, suddenly, he is gone. We feel an emptiness, a void, and, when we realize he won't be returning, we experience a growing sense of having been cheated. This film's not at all about Biko, as Attenborough led us to believe during its first hour. This story is about his white friend, a journalist named Donald Woods. Biko's presence becomes a "vehicle" to enhance Woods.

The second response one might register is one of qualified satisfaction with a well-crafted story about the sensitizing of a white liberal. Donald Woods thinks of himself as an open-minded man. But after he meets Biko and learns to admire him and love him, he can't escape a sense of moral imperative far greater than he had previously felt. Woods, step by step, begins to confront the government policy until he loses his job and his freedom. The high drama of the story unfolds as Woods tries to escape South Africa, disguised as a priest, with his forbidden manuscript.

Could the two parts have been woven into one, or should Attenborough have chosen which of the two stories he wanted to tell? The rule, of course, is to tell one story at a time, but by beginning with Biko's death and by threading Biko's life into the underpinnings of Woods' development, it could have perhaps worked. (Strangely, the screenplay this reviewer read months before shooting did exactly that and was much stronger than the final product.)

Is *Cry Freedom* worth seeing? If one doesn't mind mushy history that's a mite unfocused and self-serving. If one expects inspired, incisive storytelling, prepare for disappointment.

**Chaplin**—A worthwhile but less than epic portrait of the great actor/director Charlie Chaplin. Has brilliant moments, but in the end one never escapes the awareness that the moviemakers are trying to make an important biography—and falling short.

**Christine**—As horror films go, this one's superb. A 1958 Plymouth Fury has powers of its own, especially in the hands of a misunderstood teenager.

**City Slickers**—Some middle-aged city boys meet their mid-life crisis on the range as temporary cowboys. Warm, funny, fuzzy.

**Colors**—A less than sensitive story. Two white cops, one young and tough, the other older and more mellow, confronting black and Hispanic street gangs in L.A.

**Coma**—Young healthy patients in a Boston hospital keep ending up in a coma. Surgical resident Genevieve Bujold tracks down the conspiracy. Bujold and Michael Douglas are tops, but the story sags.

**Convoy**—Kris Kristofferson and Ali McGraw pester Ernest Borgnine the whole way through this modern cowboy picture. An independent trucker takes on the law and finds a following. John Wayne was seldom better.

**Corinna, Corinna**—Offbeat tale about an unconventional nanny helping a young girl deal with her mother's death. Endearing.

**Crossover Dreams**—This time a Latin musician is tempted to sell all to gain success. Although there is little new here, apart from the Hispanic setting and flavor, it is particularly poignant because it is told from within—rather than about—the Latin community.

**Cry Freedom**—Reviewed at left.

**Dark Eyes**—An Italian film full of stops and starts, lush cinematography, and whimsical buffoonery. Never quite finds a unity, but certain scenes are wonderful. An Italian man falls in love with a Russian woman (also married) and makes a fool of himself, sadly.

**The Deep**—Undersea adventure with jewels and drugs. Robert Shaw manages to prove his craftsmanship in spite of wobbly storyline and editing.

**Defending Your Life**—Romantic comedy by Albert Brooks about a man who, dying unexpectedly, faces Judgment Day in a theme park. So-so.

**Dim Sum**—It's an oft-told story, but a rarely used setting. Chinese-Americans in San Francisco are caught in a generation gap and uncertainty about how much to blend into America. The characters, although intriguing with an authentic "feel," are only slightly developed.



**Dirty Dancing**—Catskills in Summer 1963. Young Jewish girl fascinated by muscular dancer twice her age. Dancing's impressive; storyline's mushy.

**Disorganized Crime**—Enjoyable tale about four bumbling bank robbers and their leader who never shows up.

**Dogs of War**—Mercenaries invade an obscure African country for capitalist interests. Could have been poignant and gripping, but falls sorta flat.

**Don't Look Now**—A scary story about two intelligent people whose drowned daughter seems to be sending them messages. Donald Sutherland and Julie Christie play the haunted parents. The story's weak, but the style's the thing. Unique in its category.

**The Double Life of Veronique**—The strength of this film is the underlying hunch that human lives have parallels. Two young women, one French and one Polish, feel connected without ever having met. Elegant and elusive. In French and Polish.

**Down and Out in Beverly Hills**—Uneven comedy about a newly rich couple, plagued by guilt and lack of focus, who take in a bum.

**The Draughtsman's Contract**—An unusually opulent and engaging Restoration drama about some mean-spirited denizens of that period, including the artist whose contract includes free access to the lady of the estate. Pacing lumbars.

**8 Seconds**—An engaging film about real-life hero, world champion bull rider Lane Frost. Rodeo as a paradigm of life. Some great moments.

**The Fabulous Baker Boys**—On one hand, it's brilliantly photographed and poignantly acted; on the other hand, it's shallow and empty-headed. Two lounge-room pianists meet a pretty singer and saunter into their futures. Cute but slim.

**Falling in Love**—Robert DeNiro and Meryl Streep in an understated romance between a married man and married woman who meet in a bookstore and later on a commuter train. Poignant but unreal.

**Family Business**—Three generations of men respond variously to the call of the most attractive thing in their lives—the seduction of crime. Strong acting but a less than terrific script. Too many jumps.

**Fanny and Alexander**—If we didn't know that this is Ingmar Bergman's supposed swansong, we'd be put off. Given the benefit of the doubt, the first hour unfolds delightfully, but the rest is

a melodramatic waste. Complex tale of a Swedish clan of failed men and sad women.

**Fatal Attraction**—An unusually well crafted thriller about a married lawyer whose one-night stand becomes a nightmare. Tight, understated pacing, topnotch acting, and twisting plot pieces add up to a riveting film which never quite graduates from craft to art.

**The First Deadly Sin**—Frank Sinatra and Faye Dunaway in a strangely blended tale of a cop near retirement, his dying wife, and a nasty murderer. Uneven, but evokes a quiet pathos.

**F.I.S.T.**—Even if one ignores the unbelievable buildup for this film, it's a disappointment. Parts of the film are gems, but this too long, too manipulated story of a union boss loses the audience repeatedly.

**Flashdance**—Alex is a welder by day, and a dancer in a Pittsburgh bar at night, and dreams of being a ballerina. This high tempo exotic tale veers close to exploitation, but Jennifer Beals' performance saves it. Fast paced and entertaining.

**Flesh and Bone**—A small-time vending machine dealer falls in with an unhappy woman. Together they drift into the future and discover a terrifying past.

**Fletch**—It's less of a one-joke movie than one expects of Chevy Chase, but it's not profound. A reporter gets caught in a web of crime and invited murder, and he yarns a few webs of his own.

**Footloose**—Better than most teenploitation flicks. A city boy moves to a small town where dancing is outlawed, romances the preacher's daughter, and stirs up things. Less trite than some.

**For Pete's Sake**—Barbra Streisand has yet to do a great movie, but as roles for women of her ability go these days, Brooklyn housewife Henrietta isn't bad. She invests a loan from an underworld shark in the pork-belly market and ends up trying to stay ahead of her pay-off contract which is being passed from shark to shark. Barbra's a lark.

**For the Boys**—Soupy and uneven, but special nonetheless. A man and a woman who essentially dislike each other form a song-and-dance team to entertain American troops over a 50-year period. Bette Midler shines.

**Four Friends**—Arthur Penn's story of three young men and their girlfriend, facing up to life with all its poetic harmonies, cruelties, and absurdities. An intriguing idea about the formation of friendships, but an emotional letdown.

**Free Willy**—A good-natured tale about a sulky boy who befriends a captive killer whale. There

are villains, of course, who are against freedom and honor. But the boy never quits.

**French Postcards**—Three American students, two boys and a girl, spend their junior year in Paris, studying and seeking romance. Film seems awkward, unromantic, and disjointed.

**The Fury**—The first half sizzles; the second half sickens. Another psychic-violence-horror film in the tradition of *Carrie*. Kirk Douglas hunts his psychic son who has been captured by an intelligence agency bent on espionage. Full of suspense. Gets gory.

**F/X**—A special-effects thriller about a stage assassination with mirrors aplenty. Better than some.

**FX2: The Deadly Art of Illusion**—As high-tech action thrillers go, this one's not bad.

**The Gambler**—A spotty film with excellent moments about a bright professor who's destroying himself with reckless gambling. *California Split's* better. James Caan performs with remarkable skill.

**Ghostbusters II**—A satisfying but not outstanding sequel. A pink slime running under the city, created by the city's collective bad vibes, threatens to destroy New York City. The Ghostbusters march again. Sorta funny.

**Ghost Dad**—A bit better than expected. Bill Cosby stars as the father who neglects his kids—but gets a second chance after death.

**Goin' South**—Long but sorta nice and quaint. A western comedy starring Jack Nicholson as the outlaw and Mary Steenburgen as the widow who saved him from the gallows via marriage.

**Grease**—John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John star in a high school yarn of the '50s; tough guy meeting sweet innocent thing. Romps, sings, and glides, but the story's hollow in the center.

**The Green Room**—Does Truffaut enjoy perplexing us? A strange but highly original film (in French) about devotion to the dead. Somehow it doesn't become.

**The Grifters**—Falls flat after a very promising beginning. Three characters who live by the con try to con each other. Spicy and thrilling; then loses credibility.

**Halloween**—A psychopath is loose on Halloween eve. A horror film, deft in its manipulative terror and gore. Message-bearing, it nevertheless remains unclear. For horror buffs only.

**The Hand That Rocks the Cradle**—A widow takes revenge by becoming the nanny and would-be wife and mother to an unsuspecting family. Well crafted, such as it is.



**Havana**—Lush and haunting, this film throws the wife of a highbrow revolutionary (threshold Castro) into the path of a rootless poker player bent on the big game. Lena Olin is tops, but Robert Redford's aloofness kills any chemistry.

**Heathers**—A nasty, cutting satire of American youth which loses its way between humor and sermon. Three high school girls, each named Heather, make life miserable for the average folk. Lehmann's offbeat style shows promise.

**Hidden Angels**—An American civil liberties lawyer is murdered in Belfast. His fiancée and the official investigator find a web of threats, violence, and cover-ups. Intriguing but a bit heavy-handed.

**The Hiding Place**—The Billy Graham organization fires off its first feature motion picture, based on Corrie Ten Boom's tale of her family's trials in wartime Holland and the Ravensbruck concentration camp. Christians persecuted for aiding Jews. Surprisingly professional, but ruined as far as the general market is concerned by an insistence on sneaking in some quickie messages. Well worth seeing.

**Honeymoon in Vegas**—Hey, if you try to get married in Las Vegas during a convention of Elvis impersonators, avoid the mobster who recently lost the wife he loved. He might try to steal your wife-to-be in a poker game. Very funny at spots.

**The House on Carroll Street**—A Hitchcockian thriller by Peter Yates. Whispers and shadows in Washington during the 1951 anti-Communist hysteria.

**Huckleberry Finn**—Lovers of that great American classic will be disappointed (as is usually the case) by this film version. Key themes seem submerged, and the exuberance of the story is muted. Paul Winfield performs with his usual excellence.

**I Love Trouble**—Elements of this film really work. But the glue that holds the moments together is all Hollywood deadly formula. Too bad. Two reporters compete to cover the same investigation.

**Indecent Proposal**—A classy rich guy offers a hard-up yuppie a million dollars for the privilege of spending one night with the yuppie's attractive wife. Dilemmas.

**Indian Summer**—Seven 30-somethings spend a week at the summer camp of their youth. Has nice nuance, but could have been much better.

**Indochine**—An old-fashioned style picture set in Indochina before World War II. A bit wooden. A rubber plantation owner struggles with her own identity and that of her Asian "daughter." In French with subtitles.

**Iphigenia**—A Greek classic with Irene Pappas based on the ancient tale of a king needing to choose between his daughter and victory.

**I Sent a Letter to My Love**—French film with strong acting but slow pace. An aging woman and her brother reach out to each other.

**The Island of Dr. Moreau**—Based on H. G. Wells' tale of a scientist at work to prove hereditary links, this film swings between melodrama and intense drama. Burt Lancaster is superb (once again) as the deranged doctor bent on transforming men into animals and vice versa.

**Jacob's Ladder**—This attempt to capture the sense of danger and demons experienced by the paranoid and schizophrenic succeeds partially. Not much fun.

**Joe vs. the Volcano**—Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan team in this wacky comedy about a young man who accepts the deathbed mission of sacrificing himself to a volcano on a remote island. Uneven.

**Just You and Me, Kid**—George Burns is lovable and cute as a shelter-er of a young female fugitive. Apart from him, story and characters are forced and negligible.

**Kindergarten Cop**—Is Arnold Schwarzenegger cute? He is here as an undercover cop who has to teach kindergarten. Half enjoyable.

**The Last Detail**—Jack Nicholson escorts a poor fellow sailor to prison. Nicholson's strong, but the story limps. Drags along uninterestingly with occasional bright spots. Good for sightseeing.

**The Last Metro**—Truffaut stumbles. A theater company in Paris during the Nazi Occupation. Catherine Deneuve with Gerard Depardieu. French.

**La Vie Continue**—A tender portrayal of a woman rebuilding her life after her husband dies abruptly of a heart attack. Its gentleness is both strong and weak. In French.

**Lean on Me**—A controversial portrayal of the real-life controversial high school principal Joe Clark from Paterson, N.J. who tried to clean up a chaotic school by harsh, bullying methods. Simplistic, by the director of *Rocky*. Entertaining and heartwarming.

**L'Elegant Criminel**—A character study of a witty, elegant criminal who won many hearts in spite of his crimes and lack of remorse. In French.

**Le Secret**—The secret itself is not so important in this grim story as the havoc keeping a secret can cause in a man's mind. It's the "what if" that's scary here in the moody French landscape. Well acted. The ending seems unnecessarily shocking and too sensational.

**Lethal Weapon 3**—As action-cop pictures go, this is as entertaining and as funny as they come. Mel Gibson yammers on endlessly. Very violent, but less suffocating than most such pictures.

**The Little Drummer Girl**—Oh, what a film it could have been! Diane Keaton plays an American actress, lost in London theater, recruited by illusions into the "real" world of Middle East terrorism. Very complicated, sadly shallow.

**The Little Prince**—Richard Kiley plays an aviator whose plane is stranded in the Sahara, only to meet a small boy from a small planet. A bit tedious, the film is faithful to St. Exupery's fantasy. Children will like it.

**The Little Thief**—In French. The coming of age of a teenage orphan, a young woman with little direction or ambition who falls into stealing bigger and bigger things. Sensitive, but slow and somewhat out of focus.

**Little Vera**—A Russian film, landmark in its frankness (by Soviet standards) of sexuality and especially in its gritty portrait of the Soviet working-class family. Drunkenness, violence, and a wish for love. So-so as films go.

**The Lords of Discipline**—Terse, taut drama inside a military school where a group of students live outside the rules. A bit frenzied.

**Lost and Found**—It's always a pity when good actors are handed a trite script. Glenda Jackson and George Segal are above this slapstick romance.

**Mad Dog and Glory**—A timid police photographer inadvertently saves the life of a small-time mobster and receives, as a gift, the seven-day visit of Glory, a barmaid "owned" by the hood. Subtle, fluid, and insightful at moments. Fails to fulfill its promise.

**The Main Event**—Barbra Streisand as a manager of a boxer? Ryan O'Neal as a champion fighter? This film fails to convince. Despite that, Barbra's still a charmer.

**Maria's Lovers**—A man returns home from war to marry the woman he loves. Much has changed. An unusual picture with a strong cast, yet somehow it falters.

**The Marriage of Maria Braun**—Fassbinder's symbolic tale (in German) of a tough, beautiful, ambitious girl who survives the forsakeness of World War II and reaps the forsakeness of post-war prosperity. Too obvious and incredible, but sharp and witty nonetheless. A disappointment.

**Medicine Man**—A partially successful story about a half-mad scientist in the Brazilian jungle, trying to save the rain forest and cure cancer at the same time. The chemistry between him and



the woman who arrives to bring him under control is too contrived.

**Mister Jones**—An intriguing portrayal of a charming, mysterious man who suffers from manic-depression. His relationship with his beautiful psychiatrist may have been more plausible if the love-story triteness hadn't ruined it. Strong at points.

**The Moderns**—A lush portrait of artists and would-be's in Paris in the '20. Strong acting; impressionistic script.

**The Moon in the Gutter**—Gorgeous, shallow, and failed, this French film patches the pieces together incomprehensibly. Could have been a classic but lacks a center. A murder, a working-class youth, and a rich brother and sister.

**Moon Over Parador**—If you accept the big leap of an actor being forced to impersonate a dictator, this comedy about the Ultimate Role will make you laugh.

**The Morning After**—Uneven thriller about an alcoholic former actress who wakes up beside a murdered man and doesn't remember if she did it.

**Moses**—Burt Lancaster adds a lot of humanness to the old patriarch in a respectful performance. The film lacks a deep understanding and tries to cover too much.

**The Mosquito Coast**—A major disappointment. The team of Peter Weir and Harrison Ford fail to find the magic in this story of an eccentric inventor who takes his family away from civilization.

**Mrs. Soffel**—Perhaps it shouldn't have been based on a true story. The film, telling the story of a prison warden's wife who helped two convicts escape, seems weighted down by facts. Mel Gibson's superb.

**Murder by Decree**—Christopher Plummer as Sherlock Holmes doing battle with Jack the Ripper in a handsome tale set in Victorian England. James Mason plays Dr. Watson. Involving but a bit slow.

**Music Box**—An American-born daughter who is a lawyer defends her father against charges of being a Fascist war criminal. Tense, yet somehow unfocused.

**My American Cousin**—An interesting study of a 12-year-old girl in 1959 in the Canadian West whose handsome cousin from California invades her boredom. Worthwhile but lacks magic.

**My Cousin Vinny**—An uneven yarn about two New York college kids wrongly thrown into an Alabama jail. To the rescue comes a big-mouthed uncle who passed the bar on his sixth

try and his dirty-mouthed girlfriend who has a surprise or two of her own. Very funny in spots.

**My Father's Glory**—This French movie unfolds the sun-dappled memories of a boyhood long ago. Seems more like a short story than a novel. Quietly entertaining.

**Nadine**—A Southern-fried yarn about two Texas losers. Nadine and her estranged husband run afoul of a land developer.

**The New Adventures of Pippi Longstocking**—The audacious girl romps again, pleasing children everywhere by breaking convention.

**The Next Karate Kid**—This packaged kid-vid adds to the tenbder series a girl who learns humility and discipline.

**Night Crossing**—Rather interesting as Disney films go. Based on the true story of two families who try to escape from East Germany in a home-made balloon.

**Night Shift**—An under-rated comedy about two men who work in a New York morgue and who wander into a new version of prostitution. Henry Winkler stars and Michael Keaton shines.

**The Object of Beauty**—The pretense of wealth and manners shapes the lives of a penniless couple living the posh life. Excellent by spots.

**Oliver, Oliver**—A murky mystery about the disappearance of a nine-year-old boy who was spoiled by his mother. When a teenager shows up years later and claims to be the boy who is presumed dead, the suspense grows more murky. Loses its way. In French with subtitles.

**One on One**—A delightful yarn about a high school basketball star, lost in the college world, falling in love with his tutor and psyching out the coach.

**Ordinary People**—A major disappointment. A family struggles with death, depression, and suicide. Becomes an icy, feelingless soap opera, self-conscious ("Aren't I a good director?"), and suffocating. Great acting, decent script, but Robert Redford's directing hand freezes.

**Outland**—A terse science fiction thriller with a strong touch of the Western. The Marshal stands up against the corrupt powers in outer space.

**The Package**—An engaging espionage thriller with Gene Hackman as the military attaché who gets caught in an assassination plot.

**Peeper**—A rather cute detective yarn set in the '30s, starring Michael Caine and Natalie Wood. Photography's good and the nuances make it.

**A Perfect World**—A sensitive portrait of the relationship between an ex-con on the run and the eight-year-old boy he has taken as hostage.

**Popeye**—Robin Williams (as Popeye) and Shelley Duvall (as Olive Oyl) aren't the problem. The Class A team of Altmann (directing), Feiffer (writing), and Evans (producing) miss their aim. A gorgeous musical film vision of one of the most beloved comic strips.

**Postcards from the Edge**—The daughter of a famous actress struggles to find herself. Uneven.

**The Postman Always Rings Twice**—A gorgeously-photographed yarn about a man and a woman who plot to kill her husband. Aimless tone undercuts characterization.

**The Program**—A study of big-time college football, its challenges and glory, its problems and abuses. Enjoyable and warm-hearted. Succeeds in having us cheering and sneering in the same breath.

**Protocol**—Goldie Hawn as a sometimes hilarious waitress who becomes a heroine by saving the life of a royal visitor. Too funny to be serious; too serious to be funny.

**Q & A**—Sidney Lumet's films often possess an overheated quality. This one about police corruption in a racial/ethnic tension has its moments but seems heavy-handed and lurid. Timothy Hutton plays the idealistic lawyer who learns that prejudice fuels corruption.

**Radio Days**—Disappointing, thin film by Woody Allen. Many vignettes, many actors, many old-style radio spots, many yawns. Growing up watching radio.

**Reckless**—Another formula high school picture; Romeo and Juliet in a bleak industrial town. More artistic than most.

**The Reincarnation of Peter Proud**—A story of vengeance and the supernatural. Fascinatingly developed. Almost credible tale about the spirit of a murdered husband returning to haunt his wife—and himself.

**Reservoir Dogs**—Not for weak stomachs. A gruesome study of a violent group of hoods who botch a heist. Highly original, but brutal.

**The Return of the Pink Panther**—All is as predictable as a clown at the circus in this crazy slapstick starring Peter Sellers as Inspector Clousseau. Gags replace the missing storyline—and that's okay if you don't expect more.

**Return of the Tall Blonde**—This sequel to *The Tall Blonde Man* never touches the original for cleverness and intrigue. It does not possess enough of a new idea to survive on its own. Merely cute.

**Reversal of Fortune**—A rather cerebral film based on the Von Bulow murder case. Fancy dance seems to misstep.



**Rich in Love**—Set in rich Southern tones, this story follows the gritty survival of a teenager when her mother walks out on the family. A little heavy on the charm, but engaging anyhow.

**Risky Business**—Viewed as a teenage fantasy, this offbeat film is rather clever. It gets a bit trashy, though. A teenager and his friends fall into a novel business venture not unlike a brothel while his parents are away.

**The River Wild**—A riveting yarn of whitewater rafting. An innocent trip turns to fear and threat.

**Road to Wellville**—A highly original film. Dr. Kellogg has many unique ideas about health. Offbeat.

**Rocky III**—Sylvester Stallone gives us a third chapter, better than the second, weaker than the first. The boxer faces another challenge.

**Romancing the Stone**—Empty-handed, half enjoyable, escapist adventure film set in the jungles of Colombia. Topnotch in spots.

**The Runner Stumbles**—Why must the films which have the best opportunities to be profoundly religious always be plastic and stagey? A priest is tried for the murder of a nun whom he loved. Barely brushes the surface. A major disappointment.

**Seems Like Old Times**—This Neil Simon comedy, while hilarious, fails to meet his most recent standards. Seems hollow. Goldie Hawn is caught between her two husbands: one wacky and one respectable.

**Sherlock Holmes' Smarter Brother**—Let's cut up this funny business into variety-show segments for TV. There are funny moments in this Gene Wilder absurdity, but it lacks a center.

**Short Circuit**—A robot, designed by the military, comes alive and takes control of its destiny, with the help of some humans. Cute.

**The Slap**—Two renegade parents try to control their rebellious teenage daughters. A lot of action in this French film; not much substance.

**A Slave of Love**—A treat from the Soviet Union. "Sees" differently than Western films. While a film crew works on an inferior film (in gorgeous scenes), intrigue unfolds.

**Solaris**—A Russian philosophical science fiction movie, itself a rarity on the American scene, probes the "fiction" of what happens when man encounters himself, his past, and his consciousness in outer space. Superbly acted.

**Something Wild**—A madcap seesaw between comedy and horror. A business executive joins a wacky but mysterious woman for a bizarre fling. Uneven.

**Sparkle**—One of the new "soft" black films. It's a host of struggles on the way up the show biz ladder for these young singers. Impressionistic and sensitive.

**The Spy Who Loved Me**—As James Bond goes, this is top grade. The question is, how does 007 go for you? Roger Moore tries to outfox an underwater meanie, who wants to blow up New York and Moscow simultaneously.

**A Star Is Born**—Remake of the story of the deterioration of a man whose unknown friend rises to stardom while he falls from it. Kris Kristofferson shines, as does Barbra Streisand. Sags a great deal along the way, but it has its special moments.

**Steel Magnolias**—Six Southern white women gossip their way through this beauty parlor yarn. The excellent acting overshadows the weak character development and dialogue.

**St. Elmo's Fire**—Breezy, slick, and sleazy dimensions of seven chums who've just graduated from college. Too cheap to be profound; too charming to be ignored.

**Stir Crazy**—Gene Wilder and Richard Pryor in a wild, implausible, and occasionally funny tale about escaping from prison.

**Sugarland Express**—A poignant tale about a mother who springs her husband from a mental institution, steals a car, and rushes to rescue their child who is about to be adopted. Goldie Hawn is good.

**Summer Wishes, Winter Dreams**—Apart from Joanne Woodward, this film's a flop. But since Joanne Woodward's never a flop, it limps along, a strong actress trying to save a weak script and unimaginative direction. Martin Balsam is good as the husband of this troubled woman whose mother's death makes her see the fabric of her own life.

**The Swarm**—Killer bees turned loose in this latest disaster flick kill thousands without even concerning the viewer, so bad is the direction. Contains an absolutely marvelous moment, however, with Henry Fonda serving as a guinea pig for his own serum.

**Sweet Dreams**—Jessica Lange stars in the life and times of country singer Patsy Cline. Has its moments.

**Swing Shift**—Easy-going, but engaging, detailing the lives of war wives in defense plants during World War II, this Goldie Hawn vehicle basically succeeds.

**Taps**—Beginning woodenly, but improving as it goes, this film unspools the rather implausible tale of a group of military-academy students who

forcibly take over their school. Tim Hutton is good as the lead.

**Taxi Driver**—The fruits of Vietnam. A trip inside a tortured mind that comes inevitably to a gruesome end. Effective but offensively violent.

**The Tempest**—Paul Mazursky's allegorical tale of mid-life crisis. A wealthy architect leaves it all for an island, alone with his lover, his daughter, and a shepherd. Has its moments.

**10**—Stilted, awkward, cold story which could have been sensitive and brilliant. A successful composer panics in the face of middle age and chases the perfect female. Disappointing.

**Ten Little Indians**—Another Agatha Christie mystery, set in the Middle Eastern desert. Ten people gather to party, only to discover a murderer among them. Not quite engrossing; not very involving. So you don't really care about the characters as they die one by one.

**Teresa the Thief**—A touching portrait of a young Italian peasant girl (played beautifully by Monica Vitti) determined to pull herself above her surroundings. Comic and tragic.

**The Terminal Man**—A science-fiction yarn starring George Segal as a very bright man who has a computer placed in his neck to keep him from being violent. It malfunctions, of course. A bit gross and somehow incomplete.

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day**—Fantastic special effects highlight this struggle between good and evil. Machine missions sent from the future try to change nuclear history.

**Toys**—If you like allegories, you'll get bloated. If you like dramatic storylines, you'll starve. Robin Williams stars in an imaginative allegory about the son of a toymaker who tries to save their toy factory from his warmongering uncle.

**True Romance**—Offbeat melodrama about two young people on the run, surrounded by extreme violence, the search for affections, and a casual impulsiveness which never stops for a second thought. Very involving.

**Twilight's Last Gleaming**—A tense piece with a harrowing story line about a defrocked General (Burt Lancaster) who takes over strategic weapons to blackmail the President of the United States into a confession about Vietnam. A bit shallow, but sorta sobering.

**The Ultimate Warrior**—A quasi-philosophical piece set in a future of barricaded societies functioning on the near tribal level. Seeds and clean water are the most valuable possessions. Yul Brynner and Max von Sydow star.

**Untamed Heart**—As a fable, it's sweet and a little offbeat. As adolescent melodrama, it's tender

and involving. A chatty waitress becomes fascinated with a silent busboy with secrets.

**Uranus**—A partially successful probe of 1945 France when the communists are leading a purge for collaborators and settling personal scores. Off balance. Strong acting.

**Valentine**—A lyrical slow-paced Spanish film about the exploits of 12-year-old Pepe, his devotion to Valentine, and his friendship with the village priest (Anthony Quinn). Bittersweet.

**Venom**—Not half so scary as the ads pretend. A dangerous snake is loose in the midst of some terrorists. Some fine acting, though.

**Victor/Victoria**—A study of sex roles in Depression Paris. Julie Andrews stars as a woman reaching for stardom who poses as a male transvestite. In spite of the floozy, frantic pace, Andrews, James Garner, and Robert Preston hand in strong performances.

**Viva Italia!**—Vignettes from contemporary Italian life, wrapped into a comic anthology of sorts with three different directors.

**Volunteers**—Not quite comic, not fully cynical, *Volunteers*, is aptly timed for the Peace Corps' twenty-fifth anniversary. Most "helpers" have mixed motives; most "improvements" brought by Americans to other cultures are of dubious value, says this hardly profound picture.

**Waiting for the Moon**—A meandering study of one fictitious day in the life of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. Lightly involving.

**Walk Proud**—Robby Benson as a young Chicano faces all the big identity questions, plus a few. It all turns out a little too sweetly.

**The War**—A parable within a warmhearted tale. Children growing up with a father crippled by war. Parable lovers will enthuse; storylovers may snooze.

**A Wedding**—Altman's most disappointing film in years about a marriage between two large well-to-do families. Hodgepodge.

**Wedding in Blood**—French filmmaker Claude Chabrol brings us another crime of passion. Not his greatest film, but his technique rates him high among the Hitchcocks of cinema.

**White Men Can't Jump**—A slight but amusing film about two basketball hustlers who make a living by con on the courts of L.A.'s tough neighborhoods.

**White Palace**—A high-energy love affair between a young yuppie and a middle-aged waitress. Struggle of the classes, but steamy passion lacks steam on the real issues.

**Wilby Conspiracy**—A rather intriguing story set in South Africa about black revolutionaries and diamonds, starring Sidney Poitier and Michael Caine.

**Wildcats**—Goldie Hawn in a very uneven comedy about a woman football coach in a mean inner-city high school.

**With Honors**—Predictable tale about a homeless man at Harvard who shows up the smart but dumb students. So-so.

**A Woman at Her Window**—A rather serious French picture with heavy political overtones about a woman who helps shelter a fugitive in early WWII. Interesting but methodical.

**The Woman Next Door**—Truffaut's latest film lacks the profoundness and passion of his best, but it's a pleasant treat. A man and a woman who used to love each other meet several years later after they're both married. They discover they're neighbors. Gerard Depardieu stars with Fanny Ardant.

**Year of the Dragon**—No, it's not brilliant, but Cimino's not as lousy as they say. A violent thriller about an incorruptible cop in Chinatown. Uneven.

**Young Sherlock Holmes**—Clever, too clever, but sorta fun. Spielberg's version of Sherlock Holmes meeting Watson as youngsters.



# FOUR

**An Abdication**—Fiery Queen Christiana of Sweden gave up her throne in 1654 to find refuge in God. Despite strong performances by Liv Ullmann and Peter Finch, the film is more fragmentary than convincing.

**Angie**—Melodramatic study of an unmarried pregnant girl who's caught between romance and parenthood. So-so.

**Another Woman**—Another Woody Allen disappointment. Why is he so self-conscious when he tries to do a serious picture? The unraveling of a middle-aged philosophy professor.

**Audrey Rose**—A troubling, scary story about a man (Anthony Hopkins) who believes his dead daughter has been reincarnated in another couple's daughter. Not for the squeamish.

**Ay, Carmella!**—The adventures of a performing couple, captured during the Spanish Civil War, who have to perform for the Fascists.

**Back Roads**—Endless. A drifter and a prostitute go nowhere. Sally Field and Tommy Lee Jones.

**Back to the Future Part III**—A so-so sequel (surprise!) set mainly in the Old West. Time travel wears out.

**Bad Boys**—Violent melodrama about teenage crime. Sean Penn creates a compassionate criminal, but the story's weak.

**Bad Girls**—Four prostitutes in the wild West fight oppression and seek revenge, riding high with bimbo pistols swinging. Cliches with lipstick.

**Bank Shot**—A George C. Scott spoof about a bank heist. Only the bank's a mobile home type. Bounces along with partial success. If Scott gets an Oscar for this one, he should give it to the bank directors.

**Barcelona**—An underdeveloped, fragmented yarn about two unfocused American men. Why Spanish women even pay attention is unclear. Wanders.

**Basic Instinct**—In the end, it's an unfeeling exploitation flick with little respect for sexuality or women. A weak imitation of Hitchcock. A cop tries to find a kinky killer by taking the bait.

**The Basileus Quartet**—Strong music, decent acting, but unconvincing characterization. A world-famous but aging string quartet begins to lose its members to death and insanity. A super-youthful replacement depresses them further. Italian.

**Betsy's Wedding**—A comic attempt by a middle-class father to throw an upper-class wedding

for his daughter, employing a multitude of schemes, some less than legal.

**Beverly Hills Cop II**—Not as good as the first. Eddie Murphy stars comically again as a fast talking black cop from Detroit, solving a mystery in high-brow California.

**Big Business**—Amusing gimmick of a yarn about two sets of twins who get switched at birth. Country meets big city, with Bette Midler and Lily Tomlin.

**Bird on a Wire**—Take out the zoo, the pretty blue eyes, and the car chases, and all you have is Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn without a story. Disappointing formula story.

**Bite the Bullet**—Is a cross-country horse race really worth all this fuss? Rack it up as a nice vehicle for Candice Bergen, and for Gene Hackman who comes off as a convincing good guy.

**Black Widow**—An interesting premise. A woman marries rich men and then murders them in untraceable ways. Debra Winger plays the investigator, but it turns mediocre.

**Blank Check**—A lark of an idea—an 11-year-old is given a blank check and cashes it for a million dollars. Funny, but the fantasy runs thin.

**The Boat Is Full**—A slow-paced look at the plight of Jews trying to escape into Switzerland from Germany during World War II. Parts are deeply moving. In German by Swiss filmmaker Imhoff.

**Borderline**—At times thoughtful and touching, this look at the dilemmas and ironies surrounding illegal Mexican aliens and the suspense of a murder stars Charles Bronson.

**Born Yesterday**—A Chicago millionaire brings his Vegas showgirl-girlfriend to Washington. She embarrasses him while he bribes his way around town; he hires a tutor for her. Mostly falls flat. Endearing by spots.

**The Boys from Brazil**—An uneven, unexciting yarn about a present day Nazi scientist with a scheme to clone Hitler back into existence. Laurence Olivier comes off better as an aging Nazi-hunter than Gregory Peck does as the crazy scientist.

**Brighton Beach Memoirs**—The first of Neil Simon's trilogy about growing up in Brooklyn. So-so. The slow pace has no payoff.

**The Brink's Job**—Weak writing and editing ambush William Friedkin's film of a 1950s heist (\$2.7 million) with Peter Falk, Peter Boyle, Warren Oates, and others. Disappointing.

**Buck Rogers**—An astronaut wakes up after a 500-year freeze to encounter warfare in the heavens. So? Mildly amusing and entertaining.

**Caddyshack**—Television-type ideas keep surfacing on the big screen. This one about a bunch of laughable characters at a golf club wears thin. Chevy Chase is the best of the bunch.

**Cafe Express**—Italian film starring Nino Manfredi (*Bread and Chocolate*) as an unlicensed coffee vendor on an express train.

**Cat People**—Animal and human themes tense this frightening, gory, sexual picture. Thoughtful, too, with allegories aplenty. A woman becomes a black leopard when she makes love.

**Chances Are**—What if? What if a young man would get his memory back from a previous life? What if movies weren't this silly? What if people like what if?

**La Chevre**—The proposition is a fascinating one: if one accident-prone, bound-to-be-jinxed person is missing, send an individual with the same kind of luck to find her. More slapstick than clever.

**A Chorus of Disapproval**—In spite of strong acting, this tale of a widower moving to a new town and joining a theater group falters.

**City Heat**—Burt Reynolds and Clint Eastwood (in their first pairing) strut and mock-strut their way through a Depression-era cops and robbers yarn.

**Cliffhanger**—Apart from the spectacular scenery and photography, it's a below-average action picture. Good guys and bad guys in the Rockies.

**Cops and Robbers**—Not all that the publicity brings you to expect. Seems B-grade beside *Serpico*. Two miracle cops escapade around New York, throwing all the thugs in jail. Funny at times.

**Crazy People**—Not really sensitive, not really funny, yarn about an ad executive (Dudley Moore) who is sent to an asylum for proposing truth in advertising.

**Creator**—Peter O'Toole stars as the mad professor bent on creating life so his wife who died 30 years ago can come back to him. A bit silly and stupid. Also sorta fun at times.

**Cria**—A lyrical attempt to discover how one's past and present overlap and almost merge. Geraldine Chaplin is winning, but the confusion of the storyline ruins what seemed daring filmmaking.

**Crocodile Dundee**—A sometimes funny, sometimes interesting encounter between an

Australian crocodile hunter and a sophisticated New York reporter when she visits his world and he visits hers. A bit trite and strained.

**Dad**—Sentimental yarn about an elderly father trying to patch up things with his son. Too syrupy.

**Daisy Miller**—Peter will be Peter and Cybill tries to act like Daisy. Only this time Peter (Bogdanovich) had no one to copy. It all adds up to one big yawn, a spin-off from a Henry James story which would put even Henry to sleep. Cybill Shepherd's okay, but the whole thing's stiff and stilted.

**The Day of the Dauphin**—A washout, not even rescuable by the likes of George C. Scott. Intriguing idea, but lousy direction, script, and editing.

**The Day of the Locust**—A disheartening disappointment. John Schlesinger's film version of Nathanael West's novel about Hollywood in the Thirties had plenty of opportunity to become an unusual film. A failure in contrast to *Nashville*. Stars Karen Black and Donald Sutherland.

**Dead Calm**—A thriller about a woman and her husband who sail the Pacific to heal their grief. They encounter a menacing survivor. Script is unrelentingly manipulative. No humor or warmth.

**Deceived**—A flawed mystery. Goldie Hawn stars as a woman who discovers her husband is not the man she thought he was.

**D.O.A.**—A well-executed thriller. A literature professor who discovers he's been poisoned and has 24 hours to catch his murderer.

**Down and Dirty**—An absolutely depressing movie about a squalid, brutal Italian family and their incredibly domineering father. Too dark.

**Dressed to Kill**—Brian De Palma's sensational terror film about an attractive wife who seeks her sexual fantasy in the streets of New York. If it's a masterpiece, we missed it. Angie Dickinson stars with Michael Caine.

**The Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox**—Cutesy-poo drivel in the Old West. Goldie Hawn and George Segal go down together.

**Dying Young**—A young working-class girl from Oakland goes to work as a nurse for a wealthy but ailing young man from Nob Hill. Soupy romance.

**The Education of Sonny Carson**—The pace of this yarn about a black man's consciousness drags so pathetically that the impact of Carson's cruel world nearly escapes us. A good attempt at documentary injustice.

**Eight Men Out**—An endless baseball yarn, based on the fixing of the 1919 World Series. Has everything going for it except pace.

**Enemy Mine**—Could have been great as a comedy. Top obvious as a parable. An earthling meets a lizard-skinned enemy on a deserted planet.

**F Is for Fake**—Orson Welles plays games with his audience again. All the quick editing and intercutting are fun, and there's even some wisdom worth noting. Too bad Welles dated the picture by relying so heavily on Clifford Irving.

**Farewell, My Concubine**—Harsh, overheated, understated, and unresolved. A Chinese film about two men who play the leads in a traditional opera in the setting of 1925 China. An elegant broth without a clear flavor.

**Fast Break**—With a touch of TV's sitcom and a smidgen of sharp comedy, a New York deli manager takes a long shot at becoming basketball coach at an unheard-of Nevada college and triumphs. Gabe Kaplan stars.

**The Favor**—An unhappy single women conspires with her best friend. Touching moments, but highly unbelievable.

**La Femme Nikita**—Extremely violent portrait of a woman as a sociopathic criminal, given the choice between death and becoming an assassin for French intelligence. Raw. Lacks soul.

**Firefox**—Clint Eastwood breaks his mold and portrays a Vietnam pilot brought out of mothballs to steal a Russian airplane which threatens the free world. Better than expected, but slow and slanted.

**Fire in the Sky**—A partly successful story about a man who is captured by an alien spacecraft and returned five days later.

**First Name: Carmen**—Another offbeat, outrageous essay by French filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard. This time he actually appears in the film himself, interacting with fuzzy characters, trapped between their bodies and their actions. Ineffective.

**52 Pickup**—The harried nightmare of a businessman at the mercy of sadistic blackmailers. A largely manipulative, manipulated story lacking credibility.

**48 Hrs.**—Eddie Murphy steals the show as the convict con artist in this police thriller. Nick

Few would argue that Jack Nicholson and Meryl Streep are two of the finest actors of this generation. So what gives! How can these two giants hand in strong performances, along with four fine contributions from the supporting cast—how can you have all that good acting and end up with a lousy film?

Easy answer. Films need more than good actors.

**Heartburn** tells the story of Rachel's marriage to Mark (based on Nora Ephron's real-life tangle with Watergate journalist Carl Bernstein). Therein lies a major flaw. The movie seems too closely tied to real life, a gossipy intrusion into the fictional story of Rachel and Mark. The second major flaw is the director's permitting the movie to become, at moments, a star vehicle.

So what begins as a fragile enough story is sabotaged by 1) the writer's personal emotion (Ephron should have let another writer adapt her novel rather than to try to do it herself) and 2) the sloppiness of the director in permitting the actors at times to overwhelm the characters (in the end, one never really forgets that Nicholson and Streep are performing).

Rachel Samstat is supposedly a Jewish cookbook writer; Mark Forman is a Washington columnist. They meet, fall in love, marry, have babies. And while Rachel's pregnant with their second child, she uncovers Mark's affair with a tall woman-about-Washington.

Exploring marital relationships is the stuff of movies, but it remains very difficult turf. The most successful feature fresh stories, brilliant directors who aren't self-conscious, and un-famous actors. Then the relationships between the fictional characters have a chance to develop.

This is not to say that there's no place for famous performers in pictures like this. *Sophie's Choice* and *Prizzi's Honor* prove that. But the success depends on a strong director with a clear vision of the movement of the story.

In the end, **Heartburn** is Director Mike Nichols' failure. So often the scenes are static. The humor usually doesn't come off because it's only half there.

There are bright moments. But the jumble of static cameras, half humor, sloppy characterizations, and missed reactions makes **Heartburn** a movie worth missing.



Nolte is the cop who pulls the convict out of prison for two days to help solve a police murder. Violent and fast-paced.

**Frantic**—A partly successful suspense about an American doctor whose wife is kidnapped in Paris.

**Geronimo: An American Legend**—A Western about the great Apache warrior. Tries to be old-fashioned (great scenery and big battles) and new-fashioned (politically-correct revisionism), but falls sorta hodgepodge flat.

**The Gladiator**—A young man puts his future on hold to vindicate his father in the world of underground boxing.

**Guarding Tess**—Amusing entertainment. Former First Lady drives her Secret Service agent insane. Superficial, but has some laughs.

**Hangar 18**—A stretched tale which one wishes could have been believed about the powers that be attempting to keep the general public from knowing the truth about visitors from outer space. Parts are very good.

**He Said, She Said**—Two directors and two points of view hamper this love story of opposites. Never gets off the ground.

**Head Office**—A so-so comedy about the cut-throat craziness of powerful corporations.

**Heartburn**—Reviewed on page 49.

**Heart to Heart**—Episodic French film about three sisters and their growing-up joys and sorrows. Lacks cohesiveness and heart.

**Heat and Dust**—Sounds like an interesting idea, but fails in execution. The scandalous tale of a woman in the '20s in India who "went native" is intercut (an afterthought?) with the tale of her great-niece tracking the story today. Beautiful mishmash.

**Heaven and Earth**—Visually stunning third film in Oliver Stone's trilogy. But this one fails. It's meant to be a woman's story, but the soul is missing. The film follows Le Ly, a Vietnamese young woman, through the war and on to America. Too strident.

**Hero at Large**—A flawed sentimental make-believe tale of the power of positive thinking, hope, disillusionment, and cynicism. An urban do-gooder deceives a whole city.

**High Road to China**—Bess Armstrong and Tom Selleck star in a partly satisfying adventure about a wealthy socialite who hires a World War I flying ace to find her father in Asia. Gorgeous photography; some nice action.

**The Hindenburg**—It's tough retelling an historic event when everyone knows how it ends. *The Hindenburg* tries painfully hard and it

shows. There are some interesting teasers but the dragged-out ending ruins even those.

**Hook**—A flawed attempt by Steven Spielberg to recreate the tale of Peter Pan. Interesting for kids, perhaps, but seems more like a scrapbook than a story. Visually imaginative.

**The House of the Spirits**—A sad failure, considering all the talent involved. Tries too much. No unifying glue. A family epic, caught in South American politics. Lacks spirit.

**The Hunter**—A B-grade Steve McQueen yarn about a bounty hunter on the urban range. Plenty of action but lacking depth.

**Hustle**—Admittedly a B-grade movie, but it makes some brave attempts at capturing feeling and a sense of lostness. Unfortunately Burt Reynolds can only play himself.

**I Love You to Death**—Disappointing flop for actor Kevin Kline. The wife of a womanizing pizza-parlor owner schemes his death.

**The Incredible Shrinking Woman**—Lily Tomlin tries to mix comedy and commentary in this spoof of consumerism about a woman who shrinks. So-so. Too preachy.

**The Innocent**—Visconti's last film is a seamy, pretentious, overly explicit study of infidelity and jealousy. The lavish color and music overwhelm whatever serious themes were intended. Even Giancarlo Giannini can't save it. Anything but innocent.

**Irreconcilable Differences**—A nine-year-old suing her Hollywood parents for divorce serves as the framework for a comedy of sorts about the price of success and greed. Sometimes remarkably strong; more often not.

**I Will, I Will...For Now**—A rather idle tale of marital unhappiness with Elliott Gould and Diane Keaton. Funny by spots, but boring for miles. Comes up empty.

**The Jazz Singer**—Neil Diamond stars as the son of a Jewish cantor who chooses success as a pop singer over his tradition. Of special interest to Mennonites.

**Johnny Handsome**—A greatly disfigured criminal is given a new life and identity through major plastic surgery. Will he choose a fresh start or circle back for revenge? Decent acting, stylish images, but stretches credibility.

**Joseph Andrews**—Ann-Margaret and Peter Firth star in this early English yarn about lovers who turn out to be brother and sister (almost). Bawdy and adventuresome, it lacks depth and wit.

**The Killer Elite**—This rather brutal picture is only partly successful in telling the tale of a unit within government intelligence who kill on com-

mand. James Caan and Robert Duvall keep the story moving. Partly scary, partly disgusting.

**Kiss Me Goodbye**—A cute approach to widowhood and its miseries. Sally Field portrays a widow intent on marrying a museum expert (Jeff Bridges), but her dead husband (James Caan) reappears bodily in ghost form. Comical and sometimes tender.

**Ladyhawk**—If medieval lure is your cup of more, this may not bore. A curse prevents a knight and his lady from being man and woman together—she becomes a hawk by day, he a wolf by night. Ho hum.

**Little Darlings**—A sensationalized and vulgar summer camp yarn about two girls who are forced by rival girls to compete in losing their virginity. Disenchanting in its parallels to real life.

**Lord of the Flies**—Less than great remake of the film version of the classic book by the same title. A group of kids, marooned on a deserted island, face the illusions of civilization.

**The Lover**—An elegant, sexually frank awakening of a young woman in French colonial Saigon in 1929. Shallow short story in spite of mystique.

**Macon County Line**—Bent on violence from the start, this stark backwoods story captures strong emotion and makes the unreal almost believable. Apart from the shooting (which is sickening), there's a rather well-done study of a young boy losing his mind.

**Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome**—Not your usual futuristic vision. Full of grotesque and mad images in the postapocalyptic world, the movie lumbers to a whimpering conclusion. Turner's the fun part.

**Made in America**—Not a bad idea. A spermbank mix-up has a black student discovering her father was a white, clueless car dealer. But the chemistry doesn't quite work.

**Magnum Force**—A surprise if you're expecting nothing; a disappointment if you're expecting something. Clint Eastwood's latest shoot-em-up rampage. Script is intriguing, however, as is a handsome performance by Hal Holbrook. Violent.

**Malice**—A sexy thriller about a doctor, a mild college dean, and his beautiful wife. Too many mirrors. Runs out of steam.

**Married to the Mob**—A Mafia wife tries to disentangle. So-so comedy.

**A Matter of Time**—Fine acting. Fakey story. Glittering sets and costumes. Who really cares that Liza Minnelli rose from chambermaid to movie star with a little help from Ingrid Bergman and her suspect wisdom?



**Maverick**—Casual Western with lots of atmosphere. Pace keeps dropping as the film drags on. Has some great moments.

**Memories of a Marriage**—Danish. A warm but meandering review of an imperfect marriage, seen through backflashes.

**Merry Christmas, Mr. Lawrence**—A very different film experience, set in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp during World War II. David Bowie's portrayal as a British major adds to the bizarre fabric.

**Metropolitan**—A stuffy, self-conscious, half-witty yarn about a group of young Park Avenue socialites talking, talking.

**Midnight Express**—A harsh, unrelenting film about a young American's incarceration in a Turkish prison for dope smuggling. Preachy, lacking in subtlety, and overly violent.

**The Mighty Quinn**—Denzel Washington shines as the energetic police chief on a Caribbean island, investigating the murder of a powerful white man. Too bad the rest of the movie is B-grade.

**Mister Johnson**—A rather trite, disappointing film by Bruce Beresford. Two men in Nigeria, one British and one a local man who seems lost in his identity, try to forge a highway through the bush.

**Moment by Moment**—A disappointing vehicle for two of the screen's strongest up-and-comings, John Travolta and Lily Tomlin. Tiresome, tedious tale about a beach house, a lonely boy, and a disenchanted wife.

**Moscow Does Not Believe in Tears**—A Russian film about the drudgeries and dreams of a young woman in Moscow. Slow and sentimental.

**Mr. Klein**—Boring. An art dealer in wartime Paris comes under suspicion. Unthrilling and unintelligent.

**My Stepmother Is an Alien**—The idea was better than the results. A zany widower scientist meets a voluptuous extraterrestrial.

**Mystic Pizza**—A look at the lives and loves of three working-class Portuguese girls in a Mystic, Connecticut, pizzeria. So-so.

**Naked Gun 2 1/2: The Smell of Fear**—Highly stylized slapstick. An inept lieutenant tries to save the country and win the girl.

**Narrow Margin**—An L.A. D.A. goes to great lengths to bring back a reluctant witness. Average.

**Natural Born Killers**—Be warned. Very violent. Oliver Stone's directing hasn't lost its manipulation. A study of gun-loving crazies and their incestuous relationship with the media (and Stone?).

**Never Say Never Again**—Sean Connery returns as James Bond in another predictable but entertaining yarn about the world on the edge of destruction until the incredible Agent saves us all.

**1984**—At times effective; at times very boring. Based on Orwell's famous book, the film takes us into the world of total manipulation.

**Oliver's Story**—Soapy sequel to *Love Story*, only a little more substantial and a little less soupy. Candice Bergen and Ryan O'Neal star as the heiress who romances the young widower.

**The Osterman Weekend**—A television journalist is warned by a vindictive CIA agent that his friends are agents for Moscow. So-so suspense-thriller.

**Paperback Hero**—A pure smart aleck gets everything he deserves in this sagging story of a bored small town gang in Saskatchewan. Striking photography.

**Partners**—Two cops, one heterosexual and one homosexual, are assigned to solve the murder of a homosexual. Has some poignant moments, especially illustrating the prejudices homosexuals suffer.

**The Passenger**—The viewer needs to fill in a lot of gaps in this plotless piece by Antonioni. The cinematography is striking, but little else is. Even Jack Nicholson as the newsman who assumes another man's identity isn't allowed to flower in this film where the camera reigns supreme.

**The Piano**—Hardly a story, the theme is crushed down our throats while the poetic cinematography entices us to accept the sermon. A vivid, strange story about a mute Victorian Scottish woman who is taken against her will to her husband's country. Set in mid-nineteenth-century New Zealand. Stylized into caricature.

**Planes, Trains, & Automobiles**—A long way to go for a one-joke story. A businessman and a slob get caught together in a series of mishaps on the way home. Some of the humor works.

**Power**—Sydney Lumet's less than successful portrait of the education and power of media. More provocative than profound.

**Practice Makes Perfect**—A concert pianist in his fifties keeps chasing and losing women, highlighting the shallowness of his life in a bitter-sweet way.

**Prince of the City**—B-grade melodrama about police corruption in New York City. Means to be soul-searching, but staggers.

**Prisoner of Zenda**—Peter Sellers as both a cabby and a king in a swap-of-roles yarn, comically mounted. Succeeds mildly.

**A Private Function**—An attempt at satire on English tradition, post-World War II, when

things were grim. Alas, this film is too gussied up as it is with gross images.

**Psycho II**—Picks up where Hitchcock left off. Anthony Perkins returns as Norman Bates. The first 70% is superb; then the movie gets a flat tire.

**Purple Rain**—An innovative, smoldering rock film in which the music is more dramatic than the story. A tormented musician tries to find himself.

**The Ref**—An odd film about a kidnapper who gets caught in the web of a dysfunctional family. Hilarious.

**Renaissance Man**—A washed-up ad executive finds temporary employment teaching "comprehension" to Army recruits for whom the military has little hope.

**Revenge**—Hard-to-believe tale about a man who goes to visit his older buddy in Mexico, only to fall in love with his restless wife, getting caught in a life-or-death struggle.

**Rich and Famous**—Like the title, the story and images shine bright with glitter and dazzle, but their shallowness leaves an aftertaste. Candice Bergen portrays the woman who turns to writing out of jealousy of her best friend (Jacqueline Bisset) and becomes a big, vulgar success.

**Richard Pryor Live on the Sunset Strip**—One of America's funniest comics in his first concert after personal tragedy. Very funny, but the foul-mouthed delivery clutters the humor unnecessarily.

**The River**—Can't someone turn off the music? A farm, threatened by the river, by a devious businessman, and by the bank. Fine moments by Sissy Spacek and Mel Gibson are drowned by the suds and music.

**River's Edge**—A distressing film about a numb generation. A dark story. A teen kills a friend, brags about it, but no one cares. No feeling, no conscience. Film feels somewhat manipulative.

**Rollerball**—An only partly successful attempt at science fiction. Well-paced with top-rate acting by James Caan, John Houseman, and Ralph Richardson, it deals with a future one-world society in which a violent sport called "rollerball" is supreme. Unclear in its implications.

**The Romantic Englishwoman**—Where—pray tell—in this three-cornered relationship is the romance? Here are three good actors and some interesting pieces, but a puzzle that just doesn't fit.

**Rookie of the Year**—A mediocre Little Leaguer breaks his arm and becomes an ace pitcher in the majors. A fantasy for sure. But that's what dreams are for!

**A Room with a View**—A rather dull but classy film based on Forster's tale of the English in Italy.



**Running Scared**—Two cops in Chicago pursue a hood. Partly funny.

**She-Devil**—A mildly funny story about a housewife plotting revenge against her husband when he falls in love with a beautiful romance novelist.

**The Sheltering Sky**—Spectacularly beautiful cinema photography, exasperating story, obnoxious characterizations. All very avant garde and boring.

**Shining Through**—A do-it-by-formula old-style World War II yarn about a secretary who becomes an amateur spy.

**The Shooting Party**—Lots of suffocating style and atmosphere but not a lot of substance. Set in 1913 England, the film foreshadows the coming turmoil of two World Wars and what they hold for the aristocracy.

**Short Cuts**—A disappointment from a major talent. Robert Altman intercuts nine separate short stories into one impressionistic three-hour stew. Falls flat, the further it goes.

**A Simple Story**—Romy Schneider plays a French woman caught in the tedium of mid-life between a too-familiar lover and a too-cold husband. So-so.

**Singles**—An episodic yarn about single life, the fear of falling in love, and hesitation in general.

**S.O.B.**—A bitter, funny critique of the film industry. A director who makes a flop tries to reshoot a vulgar version.

**Somebody Killed Her Husband**—Could have been worse. Farrah Fawcett-Majors actually acts for part of the film. Boyfriend Timothy Bottoms tries to help her solve her husband's murder. So-so.

**Some Kind of Wonderful**—Another high school portrait by John Hughes which feels more manipulated than insightful. Two less-than-hip teenagers triumph over their detractors.

**Soul Man**—A less-than-successful attempt at social commentary. A wealthy white law student schemes access to a minority scholarship.

**Soupcon**—French film about a couple who split after twenty-five years of marriage. Depressing.

**The Sphinx**—An Egyptologist hunts for a secret tomb, only to find intrigue. Fast-paced but hollow.

**Stardust Memories**—A minor, self-conscious Woody Allen effort. Wavers between smug and embarrassing. Why? A director's nightmare with identity.

**Steppenwolf**—This story of the mind should have stayed on paper instead of going to the screen. It's boring and lacking. Although Max von Sydow does well as the lead.

**Still in the Night**—A cheat. A thriller with top

acting (Meryl Streep, Roy Scheider) which goes nowhere.

**Story of Women**—A bleak French movie about the survival of a young woman during the Nazi Occupation. Based on an actual incident, the film is neither sympathetic nor moralistic.

**Straight Talk**—Is any picture right for Dolly Parton? Talented with a tentative surreal quality, she dominates and undercuts this tale about an unlikely radio call-in host.

**Tampopo**—This Japanese farce details the search by a restaurant owner for the perfect noodle recipe.

**Target**—A mediocre thriller about what a son learns about his father's mysterious past when they go to Europe to find his mother.

**That's Entertainment**—Unless you've been going to the movies since the '30s, this MGM documentary of its five decades of motion pictures will barely keep you awake.

**That's Life**—If you can stomach Jack Lemmon's endless whining, this film about an architect facing retirement has some strong, intelligent moments. If.

**Thirty Two Short Films about Glenn Gould**—Definitely for the film buffs only. An interesting series of short scenes about eccentric pianist Glenn Gould.

**This is My Life**—A smallish tale of an eccentric single mother who decides to pursue a career in comedy. Warm-hearted.

**Three Men and a Baby**—A copy of the recent French farce about three men who are suddenly left with a baby. Heartwarming in many ways. The baby in this version is about the only aspect better than the original.

**Three Men and a Little Lady**—The baby's five, the three bachelor-fathers seem restless, and the mother's unhappy. Mildly amusing sequel.

**Time Bandits**—A journey through history with dwarfs who are the helpers of the Supreme Being. Some very imaginative scenes in this fantasy end up going nowhere because the film lacks coherence.

**Tune in Tomorrow**—A ragged bit of whimsy, spun into an odd mixture of half jokes and shabby acting, all set in a New Orleans radio station in the '50s.

**Twins**—Not as obnoxious as it sounds. Danny DeVito and Arnold Schwarzenegger play twins separated at birth, one completely good, the other totally hopeless. Half charming.

**Two Mikes Don't Make a Wright**—Three short films in one, including a droll yarn with Stephen Wright. Most hilarious, however, is the third short entitled "A Sense of History."

**Uncommon Valor**—Has some strong moments. Fantasy about fighting the Vietnam War right and preserving honor. A team returns to rescue some relatives missing in action.

**Unfaithfully Yours**—The jealous husband this time is a renowned conductor (Dudley Moore) who suspects his protege and plots death while he conducts. Funny by spells, but mainly silly.

**Voyage en Douce**—Two women hit the road, tell pretend stories seriously, and indulge in fantasies in this so-so French film.

**Walking Tall**—Freely based on the exploits of a sheriff in Tennessee. Violent and manipulative; the inverse of *Billy Jack*. Involves audience emotionally. You'll either love it or hate it. Beware!

**The War of the Roses**—An overwrought melodrama about a couple whose marriage unravels into absurd cruelty. Unbelievable.

**We're No Angels**—David Mamet's writing lacks most everything in this tale of two escaped convicts disguised as priests.

**The Whistle Blower**—Fine acting can't save an unbelievable story. A father investigates the death of his son who worked for British intelligence.

**White Line Fever**—A B-grade story of a young man who owns a truck rig and his fight against the unions. Rather well done. Nothing sensational, but hangs in there in a bittersweet sort of way.

**White Mischief**—An only-partly successful portrait of decadence. Britishers cooling their heels in Kenya until World War II ends, living out their selfish aimlessness. Beautiful photography.

**Winter of Our Dreams**—Australian film about a young book dealer who becomes attached to a prostitute while looking into the death of a friend. Impressionistic and sensitive, it lacks movement.

**The Woman in Red**—An ad executive in mid-life crisis falls for a model in a red dress. Puppy dog cute. Frivolous with occasional flashes of brilliance.

**The Yakuza**—A sometimes brutal, sometimes exotic story of a man (Robert Mitchum) who gets involved with the Yakuza (a Japanese version of the Mafia). It isn't trite, but it doesn't hold together either. Acting is strong, but somehow the mood doesn't fit the story.

**Young Doctors in Love**—Attempts to be a medical version of "Airplane," but crashlands in the operating room. Rowdy, poor taste, and scattered laughs.

# T H R E E

**The Addams Family**—A waste. A take-off on *New Yorker* cartoons with a dysfunctional family as characters. Stale and plotless.

**Airport '77**—As a formula picture, it's above norm. Which isn't saying much. Rather boring yarn about a Boeing 747 converted into a club in the clouds taking a party to a Florida art function. The crash lacks excitement and credibility. The usual parade of movie stars who do it for the money, not the script.

**All Night Long**—Feeble, boring look at mid-life burnout. Gene Hackman and Barbra Streisand.

**All Screwed Up**—Lina Wertmuller is the most studied filmmaker of the year. Her films mix politics, economics, and story in a less than obvious manner. Fellini's influence is everywhere apparent. In this third of her trilogy (*Love and Anarchy* and *The Seduction of Mimi* were the other two,) however, there are few telltales of her impending genius in *Swept Away* and *Seven Beauties*. A study of young Italian workers.

**Almost an Angel**—A highly talented thief, fresh out of prison, suffers a head injury and believes he's died and is back on earth on a second-chance mission. Slow, ineffective.

**American Gigolo**—Trashy film about a trashy life. Times and afflictions of a male prostitute. Character is one-dimensional.

**Another 48 Hrs.**—Eddie Murphy lacks sparkle in this shoot-'em-up sequel. A cop forces a convict to help chase drug lords.

**Another Stakeout**—Sequel fails. Less than average yarn about two cops on a stakeout.

**Any Which Way You Can**—This latest Clint Eastwood film, while better, still goes every which way to nowhere. A loser has a fist fight with the Mafia.

**At Play in the Fields of the Lord**—Reviewed on page 55.

**Back to the Future Part II**—Unfunny sequel, flitting forward and backward in time, with characters meeting other versions of themselves.

**Benji**—An extremely successful children's film about a dog which performs warm heroic deeds. Wholesome and boring.

**The Black Bird**—What a setup! This whole gang ought to be fined for mooching off a fine old thriller (*The Flying Falcon*), then giving its audiences a waffle instead of the expected witty spoof.

**Blood Wedding**—An arty but boring dance-drama about the contest of two boys over a beautiful girl. The title says it.

**Blue Steel**—Interesting idea. Traditional police picture with a rookie female cop trying to nab a serial killer. Falters.

**Bonfire of the Vanities**—A major disappointment. Flat characters and lifeless script deaden a boring story about the fall of a powerful bond trader in New York.

**Boomerang**—A disappointing movie about an advertising executive who "loves women," only to meet his comeuppance from his new female boss.

**The Bounty**—Thoroughly boring retelling of the mutiny on the ship *Bounty*, trying to round Cape Horn, and the subsequent visit to Tahiti.

**Boxing Helena**—A macabre, shocking look at an obsessive surgeon who uses his skills to hold hostage the woman he "loves." Too perverse in the main going, for most viewers. Makes its parable lesson in the end, but even that is too obvious. Excessive.

**Breathless**—A shallow, self-consciously lewd yarn about a hoodlum trapped in his desperate life. Richard Gere stars in this remake of Godard's 1959 classic.

**Buddy, Buddy**—A silly, shallow bit about a hired gun (Walter Matthau) and a man constantly threatening suicide (Jack Lemmon) who end up in hotel rooms next to each other. Disappointing.

**The Butcher's Wife**—A fluffy yarn about an intuitive woman who sees into the hearts of her Greenwich Village neighbors, especially the shrink.

**Caveman**—A crude, offbeat, but sometimes funny, prehistoric yarn about early humankind with Ringo Starr and Barbara Bach.

**Celeste**—A very, very slow portrait of Proust's maid and friend. A sense of artistic structure adds strength.

**Cleopatra Jones and the Casino of Gold**—Clearly a showcase for Tamara Dobson as the tough lady cop. It's part of the fantastic karate knock-'em-flat genre, not meant to be taken as serious violence.

**Cocktail**—A young ambitious opportunist slips and slides between bartending and women. Poorly constructed.

**Come Have Coffee with Us**—Italian film about a proper-appearing bureaucrat who seduces three spinster sisters. Or is it the other way around?

**The Comfort of Strangers**—A menacing, decadent yarn, set in Venice. An aimless English couple becomes ensnared by a sinister local man and his wife.

**Consenting Adults**—A manipulative yarn about two yuppie couples who consent to trade partners and meet death. Implausible.

**Crocodile Dundee II**—A fluffy sequel about the Australian outdoorsman lost in New York City. This time he takes on a drug lord. Hum.

**Cuba**—Havana during the last days of Batista. Promises more than it delivers. Somehow never jells.

**Damage**—A highly stylized, self-conscious slick flick about torrid, forbidden sex among the English ruling class. Too earnest, too empty.

**Damien: Omen II**—The evil child strikes again. Draggy melodrama. The antichrist comes of age and learns his mission. Disappointing.

**Damnation Alley**—Nuclear survivors struggle across lifeless America. Goes nowhere.

**Death Becomes Her**—A conceited actress and a vengeful writer compete over a plastic surgeon. Half-funny, half-weird satire of our society's intoxication with staying young.

**Die Hard 2**—In a so-so sequel, Bruce Willis plays the cop who single-handedly battles terrorists in and around a New York airport. A lot of mindless violence.

**Domino Principle**—Better than expected if you expect nothing. Gene Hackman says he can afford to make pictures for money, not roles. Here's proof. So-so tale of a man sprung from prison by the mob to do their hitmanship. Candice Bergen flops.

**Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands**—A Brazilian film making fun of the Latin lover stereotype, at the same time it reinforces it. The first husband dies of exhaustion from his sexual escapades, only to return after his wife marries a prim pharmacist.

**Earthbound**—A rather plastic (what else is new?) family picture about foreign beings stranded on earth. Silly.



**Edward Scissorhands**—Like a pastel mirage, this fable of a boy created by a mad scientist tries to be loveable and profound, but mainly it's pastel.

**Especially on Sunday**—Three short love stories, presented as a collection. All are mediocre. Title's the best thing. In French.

**Every Man for Himself**—Genius shines through the cracks of this new Godard film. Explores through cinematic poetry and a rather explicit sexual metaphor the sad distance between all humans.

**Falling Down**—Feels like a mechanic in the kitchen—no soul in the stew. A super-hassled man loses his job and makes his way home across Los Angeles in a trek of violent outrage. Falls flat.

**The Favor, the Watch, and the Very Big Fish**—An highly offbeat flick about a devotional photographer and the model he chooses to pose as Christ. Half-baked half laugh.

**Final Analysis**—A psychiatrist becomes involved with a patient's sister in a shallow thriller that's overwrought and underacted. Save your money.

**Flight to Moscow**—A superspy yarn about international cold war conspiracies with several levels, a group of fine actors, and decent tempo. Not the worst, not the best.

**The Fortune**—Funny how a film with all the right ingredients just may not work. Take director Mike Nichols with actors Jack Nicholson and Warren Beatty, set them in the twenties, and give everything a comic twist. This surefire misfired. It's boring and not even cute, although it tries awfully hard. Forget it.

**The Fourth Man**—Bizarre Dutch film about a dangerous woman and her lover who's obsessed with her other lover.

**Freebie and the Bean**—A disappointing spoof about two weird cops, wasting the talents of Alan Arkin and James Caan.

**French Connection II**—Must we sequel everything? Gene Hackman again stars in a dismal remake of his Popeye Doyle role, this time in Marseilles. Violent and hollow.

**Gold**—Roger Moore and Susannah York turn up in South Africa, and Roger actually gets wet and dirty in the gold mines. Once again—flimsy characters wing a melodramatic script. If only the story would have washed away in the mine flood.

**Golden Girl**—A beautiful girl's race to the Olympics is complicated by others' lust for money and international recognition. Uninspired.

**A Good Man in Africa**—Well-meaning but boring portrait of an English diplomat in West Africa. Never comes together.

**The Great Wall**—A slight, disappointing film about the traditional and the assimilated. Chinese Americans in Beijing. In Mandarin and English.

**Hamburger Hill**—Another Vietnam picture, this one less imaginative and somehow plodding. A futile battle.

**The Hand**—Michael Caine stars in this unusual mix of horror about a man who loses his hand in an accident.

**Heart Condition**—A twist on switched identities. A bigoted cop has a heart transplant, only to discover it is the heart of his enemy, a black lawyer. Too big a reach.

**Hearts and Minds**—A major disappointment. Could have been a significant film but the producers were more bent on saying "I told you so" than in expressing compassion. The manner in which it presents itself demonstrates the very thing it is attacking. Shallow and, at times, silly. A strongly biased documentary-type view of the Vietnam involvement. Save your money.

**Hot Dog . . . The Movie**—Outrageous, unbelievable romp about some fanatical skiers at a half-horse competition that includes as much sex as snow.

**Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade**—The tempo's the same, the adventure less, the characterizations thin (Sean Connery is good), and the content senseless. Ah yes, some nonsense about the Holy Grail. Uninspired.

**Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom**—Sure, it's exciting at first, but the constant Spielberg-invented crises dull under rapid fire. Yawn. Harrison Ford goes to the Palace of Pankot on a mission of mercy to free children and to put an end to human sacrifice.

**The Inheritance**—A mediocre yarn about a young girl (Dominique Sanda) who worms her way into a wealthy family's wealth (and beds). Anthony Quinn's not too good.

**Jack the Bear**—A depressed, offbeat father tries to raise his two sons. Misses the thin line between poignant comedy and overwrought farce.

**Jesus of Montreal**—Caught between being too clever and too contrived, this story of an actor becoming the character he plays suffers from mixed metaphors, heavyhanded symbolism, and mushy storyline. Has strong visuals.

**The Jigsaw Man**—As an espionage thriller about double agents, this ranks a stripe above the average. But haven't we seen this all before? Russians, the British Secret Service, and secrets.

**Jo-Jo Dancer**—Too autobiographical, too didactic, too serious. Richard Pryor lacks his usual impact because he turns the film into sermon time about his life's failings. Too bad.

**Jonah Who Will Be 25 in the Year 2,000**—If this French yarn is a comedy, you could have fooled me. If it's a satire, ditto. A political tale about a fringe group of young people living out half-truths.

**Kangaroo**—Stiff political passions in 1922 Australia. Explores art, action, war, and politics. Mainly boring.

**The Karate Kid Part III**—By itself, weak; as a sequel, super weak. A local bully forces Daniel to fight again. Heart, yes—but that's it.

**Key Exchange**—Ho-hum. A retread about marriage and commitment among Yuppies in New York. What are they willing to sacrifice for whom is the question in this yarn, which makes neither freedom nor marriage look attractive.

**Kung Fu Master**—A French film about a 40-year-old woman who falls in love with a 15-year-old boy. Sensitive but implausible.

**La Grande Bourgeoise**—Socialist hogwash. Italian film depicting the tale of a brother's dark defense of his sister. Didactic and slanted. Catherine Deneuve and Giancarlo Giannini star.

**Last Embrace**—A few interesting story pieces get lost in the smoke of this tale of a girl who seeks revenge for her grandmother's having been forced into prostitution.

**The Last Remake of Beau Geste**—A Marty Feldman spoof of three earlier attempts to tell the Geste experience with the French Foreign Legion in the desert. A laugh per hour in this 90-minute film.

**Law and Disorder**—A disappointing film starring Carroll O'Connor and Ernest Borgnine as two middle-aged New Yorkers seeking to right the wrongs of their urban jungle. Lacks direction.

**Lethal Weapon**—As formula action pictures go, this one is a stripe better than most. Guns, gags, and Gibson (Mel). A cop buddy story.

**Life with Mikey**—A disappointment. A child actor grows up to be an agent for child actors. Misfires.

**A Little Sex**—Disappointing attempt by M.T.M. Productions to go theatrical. It's a television movie on the big screen. Cutesy story about a young man trying to remain faithful to his wife.

**Looking for Mr. Goodbar**—This disgustingly manipulated socio-sexual thriller with Diane Keaton could have been a masterpiece; instead it is appalling and twisted. There's no room to breathe.





**At Play in the Fields of the Lord, Black Robe, and Rapture**—Three recent films illustrate how difficult it remains to produce a movie which has a strong, authentic thread related to Christian faith.

Perhaps part of the reason lies in the spiritual barrenness of Hollywood and other film centers. Many persons involved in film and television consider a religious commitment not only restrictive and narrow, but also dangerous and oppressive. It's true that religious convictions often draw a line, whatever the issue. This is unfair, unnecessary, and immature, according to many "open-minded" moderns.

Of course, most "liberal" moderns are as narrow in excluding others as anyone else. One of the great contemporary pastimes available to humor all of us is surveying the "open-minded" narrowness of hollow liber-

als who feel superior to all the prehistoric peons who cherish any belief whatsoever.

So most filmmakers, in trying to explore a religious theme, carry fears of condescension from their peers, wonder if they themselves are losing their balance, and stumble on unfamiliar terrain.

Will the film-going public accept a character of faith who exhibits Christian values? Or must we undercut that faith? Will the introduction of the "clay feet" element strengthen or demolish the character?

So many films are manipulated these days with sex and violence. Producers whose marriages have broken up, who have no real home other than their offices strewn with demographics, who go with the flow and have little concept of taking a stand for a religious belief, are naturally suspicious of Christian faith. Their immediate impulse is to manipulate that faith rather than explore it with integrity.

**At Play in the Fields of the Lord** is a splendid title for a mediocre film. Set near and in the Brazilian rain forest, the movie mixes a variety of themes in a confusing brew. We have some mercenaries who've been hired to drive the Indians from their valuable land. We have some rigid Fundamentalist missionaries who want to convert and civilize the Indians. And then there are the Indians who are portrayed in a noble manner.

One of the mercenaries, who is half-Cheyenne himself, switches sides and tries to help the Indians hold their land against the white invaders, including the missionaries.

The exploration of themes seems trite and elementary. Could it be that the writer and director are thinking about the ambiguities of faith for the first time? How can serious themes be established with cardboard characters, simplistic script, and poor directing! Some of the acting seems amateur, in spite of top-flight stars.

On the other hand, Bruce Beresford is one of the finest directors in the world (**Breaker Morant**), so one expects maturity and passion from his **Black Robe**. Once again the end result disappoints.

Set in the northern American wilderness in 1634, **Black Robe** portrays the ambitious 1500-mile journey upriver of an idealistic French Catholic missionary. Father Laforgue wants to baptize the Indians so they can go to heaven.

**Black Robe** lacks heart and passion. The viewer does not bond emotionally with any character, and can therefore not feel torn between characters. Faith is again indicted as conquest rather than liberation.

The third recent film, **Rapture**, represents a very different category. It has the "anything goes" feeling of an independent film. This energizes it during the first half and does it in during the latter part.

**Rapture** explores the promiscuous life of a telephone operator and her pleasure-seeking boyfriend who test sexual conventions to fill their empty lives with some spark of excitement. One day she hears several fellow workers in the lunch room discussing "The Pearl." Then two door-to-door evangelists visit her. She makes the leap and her life changes.

The tragic events surrounding the main character's expectancy and disillusionment lack coherence. Confusion is passed off as insight by the filmmaker. In the end, the film goes nowhere, which is especially disappointing in light of the initial, independent originality one senses.

And so we wait. When will films be able to explore faith with the same seriousness as one finds in some novels? Does the mass audience market automatically require manipulation of Christian faith? We hope not.



**Looking Up**—Sometimes tender, sometimes wacky, sometimes purely inept, this story of a large extended family's ups and downs meanders astray.

**Luna**—Bertolucci's overwrought soap opera about an opera singer's incestuous flirtation with her teenage son. Lacks credibility and unity.

**The Man with the Golden Gun**—More 007 adventure with Roger Moore. This time the villain threatens an energy crisis. New gadgets but not much new story.

**The Match Factory Girl**—A humdrum portrait of an average factory worker with an unlovely but unguarded face. She is nearly mute, as is this Finnish film.

**Mediterraneo**—A soft, leisurely story about eight Italian soldiers isolated on a Greek island during World War II. Mild and unfocused. In Italian with English subtitles.

**The Medusa Touch**—Richard Burton in an average performance about a man with psychic destructive powers. Little suspense.

**Miami Blues**—An offbeat, out-of-sync flick about a grizzled cop, a man who likes to shoot people, and a prostitute. Seems mainly about false teeth. Never comes together.

**Mon Oncle D' Amerique**—A trite illustrated lecture about human behavior. One big yawn.

**Moonraker**—This James Bond, complete with wild special effects and beautiful women, limps at a sluggish pace. Technique just can't replace a plot.

**Mountain Men**—Charlton Heston and Brian Keith as two old-timers in the wild west. Lumbers, with some sweet moments.

**Mr. Destiny**—A so-so attempt to replay "what if." A stranger gives a man a chance to make good on his worst mistake.

**Naked**—Dar, violent study of a drifter in seedy London. Brittle intelligence can't redeem the sewer.

**The Naked Gun**—A silly spoof of the TV series "Police Squad" which runs out of gas often and early.

**Naked Lunch**—A small, stylish, disgusting hallucination about the accidental killing of a man's wife and his attempt to write. For specialists only.

**National Lampoon's Vacation**—A sometimes funny, often sick yarn about the trip to California by a not-too-bright daddy (Chevy Chase), his wife, and their two kids. Veers right off the road.

**New Jack City**—Slightly better than usual action picture about a drug lord and the cops who try to catch him.

**Norman, Is That You?**—Redd Foxx and Pearl Bailey star in a sexual farce which, apart from occasional humor, could have stayed on the shelf.

**North Avenue Irregulars**—Women may be bumbling but they'll get a job done, providing you flatter them in the right way. That's the bottom line in this batty bit of fluff about the church auxiliary who wipes out the gamblers in town.

**Open Season**—A frightening story about some hunting buddies who find bizarre diversions. Unduly manipulative in its execution.

**The Other Side of Midnight**—Trite mush. A deserted lover works her vengeance on the young soldier who never came back. Soupy.

**Passenger 57**—A below-average action picture about a security expert who happens to be on the same flight as an international terrorist under arrest.

**Patriot Games**—A less-than-effective action yarn about a CIA man and his endangered family.

**Pennies from Heaven**—Steve Martin spreads his wings in a brave attempt to do a different kind of musical. The story of a salesman in the Depression is intercut with the wistful musicals of the period. Sorta flops.

**Perfect**—Anything but. Sad disappointment from a strong director and two talented actors. A reporter exposing health clubs.

**The Philadelphia Experiment**—If you like time warps, maybe; if you don't, save your coin. Dreary yarn about 1943 sailors who end up in 1984.

**Point Break**—An F.B.I. agent takes up surfing to crack a series of unusual robberies. Will the agent become a rebel? Strong action fizzles.

**The Purple Rose of Cairo**—If Woody Allen weren't involved we'd expect less but we wouldn't be disappointed less. A waitress forgets her customers, dreaming of the movies. Reality's a cheat. This cheat of a movie seems to be dreaming. Mia Farrow stars.

**Quicksilver**—A stockbroker loses it all and becomes a brigade messenger. Ho-hum.

**Quiz Show**—Classy failure. Attempt to use quiz show scandal of the '50s to analyze American culture. Wooden.

**The Rainbow**—Ken Russell's trashy version of D.H. Lawrence's novel about the sexual awareness of a young woman falls flat.

**Rancho Deluxe**—Who can resist Jeff Bridges even when he's a naughty cattle-rustler? The story dawdles and never moves far off the spot,

but Bridges alone is entertaining in this absurdist Western.

**Rapid Fire**—Half-winsome, small flick about a college student who uses martial arts to survive a mess.

**Rapture**—Reviewed on page 55.

**Revenge of the Nerds**—If you like lampoonish comedy, this may be your cup of tea. The nerds, so put upon as they arrive at college, plan their outrageous revenge. Nerdish.

**The Ritz**—Pulls every gag for a laugh, and leaves one gagging instead of giggling. Life in this bathhouse is grubby. So is the story if one dare call it that.

**Romeo is Bleeding**—Potboiler about a gorgeous gangster who seduces a cop, then double-crosses him. Overwrought.

**Scandal**—Self-conscious, unfeeling and ineffective yarn recounting the sexual scandal which brought down MacMillan's Conservative government in the '60s.

**The Secret of My Success**—An implausible fairy tale that's more lame than funny. A yuppie grabs for the brass ring.

**Single White Female**—A B-grade stalker-thriller about the roommate who answers the ad of an unsuspecting Manhattan businesswoman.

**Skin Deep**—Enough said. Shallow sketch of a writer who wallows from woman to woman.

**Smokey and the Bandit**—Burt Reynolds and Sally Field in a wild race across the American South, bootlegging. So-so.

**Smokey and the Bandit II**—Burt Reynolds and Sally Field escort a pregnant elephant from Florida to Texas, chased by Jackie Gleason. It's really very boring. Also quite self-conscious.

**Space Camp**—An improbable yarn about some kids who are aspiring astronauts. Their shuttle is accidentally launched into space in a melodramatic crisis.

**Star 80**—Based on the true story of a *Playboy* centerfold who was murdered by her estranged husband. Bob Fosse seems intent on a centerfold of his own. Born loser the whole way.

**Star Trek**—Apart from the special effects, it really goes nowhere. Trite story about battling a superior intelligence in space.

**The Story of Boys and Girls**—A study of the engagement party of an upperclass Italian boy who plans to marry a peasant girl. Boring and slow.

**Striking Distance**—A washed-up homicide detective disappoints everyone. Things are so

bad he gets a female partner. Things, of course, improve on cue, and guess who's the hero! So-so action picture.

**The Survivors**—A mismatch of both casting and humor. Two losers try to win, but the length of the yarn and the competition of the smorgasbord comedy leaves an aftertaste that ain't funny. Walter Matthau and Robin Williams disappoint.

**The Temp**—A manipulated but delicious yarn about a temporary assistant whose ambition eats up her superiors. Inadequate ending seems abrupt.

**Tequila Sunrise**—A sultry melodrama with thin characters and little plot about a cop, a drug dealer, and a lady who runs a restaurant. Main shade is shallow.

**Thieves**—Apart from some haunting flute—I mean, piccolo—music, this filmed Broadway

yawn about an estranged couple (Marlo Thomas and Charles Grodin) is an insult. Self-conscious and trivial.

**This Boy's Life**—An unrelenting study of a stepfather's abusive oppression of the boy who moves into his household. Too excessive. Lacks human touch in the storyteller.

**Total Recall**—Science fiction with a secret agent who can't tell if his experiences are real or programmed. Schwarzenegger is better than usual but surrounded by lack of distinction.

**True Lies**—Better than some Schwarzenegger flicks, but not James Bond. Spies, terrorists, and marriage boredom.

**Under the Volcano**—Serious and seriously flawed. Ambitious film about an upper-class alcoholic whose life has collapsed and whose wife and friend can't save him. Unbelievable ending.

**Valley Girl**—Romeo and Juliet ala queen of suburbia and punk rock king. Has some good moments but flounders.

**Wayne's World**—A television-quality yarn on the big screen to milk the audience. Funny by spells. Notttttt.

**The Wild Party**—Tale of depraved society starring James Coco and Raquel Welch which gets bogged down in its own mire. Fails.

**Willie & Phil**—Forget it. Two good friends who love the same girl. Goes nowhere.

**Xanadu**—A flimsy story put together as an excuse for Olivia Newton-John and Gene Kelly to sing and dance in tandem.

**Year of the Gun**—Highly-stylized thriller about a journalist working on a novel about Italian terrorism. Suffers from weak acting.



# T W O

**Alien 3**—A dull installment in the science fiction struggle to overcome an alien, this time set on a prison planet.

**American Me**—This attempt to make a Mexican-American *Godfather* misfires. Violence is celebrated rather than dissected.

**Avalanche Express**—A B-grade yarn of international defection, double agents, and sabotage of TV quality. Lee Marvin, Robert Shaw, and Maximilian Schell.

**The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas**—A rather dull, lifeless musical yarn about puritan crusaders trying to close down a brothel. If Burt Reynolds and Dolly Parton weren't part of the cast, and a weak part at that, this would rate as a B-grade flop.

**The Betsy**—Potboiler ala Harold Robbins novel. Sex and violence on the way to the top of the heap in an automobile empire. Cheap and flimsy, in spite of Lawrence Olivier.

**The Big Sleep**—One big snore of a cutesy update of the Raymond Chandler novel with Robert Mitchum as the private eye.

**Big Town**—Country boy goes to Chicago to make it big as a gambler. Lightweight flick full of clichés.

**Black Christmas**—A scary story about a series of murders in a girl's sorority house at Christmas time. Only partly effective and creepy. features Olivia Hussey and Keir Dullea.

**The Black Hole**—Another science-fiction yawn, this one by the Disney people about life on the edge of a hole in space. Truly unimaginative.

**Bloodline**—A smaltzy potboiler about a rich family fighting over vast family holdings. Melodramatic and disappointing.

**Class**—Unclassy yarn about an overheated woman (Jacqueline Bisset), slightly unhinged, who engages a college boy in sex. College boy discovers the woman is his roommate's mother. Lost cause.

**Clue**—Based on the popular board game, this whodunit leaves its audience gamely bored.

**The Dead Pool**—A dreary, dispassionate dud. Dirty Harry (Clint Eastwood) disposes of more scum.

**Demon Seed**—A horror science-fiction combination starring Julie Christie as the scientist's wife who is attacked by the scientist's creation.

Bizarre. The computer attempts to create its own perfect offspring.

**The Dove**—A slender story line with zero imagination. Too typical of the kind of hollow pictures made as family fare. A boy takes his sloop across the ocean and has a rough time.

**Dream Lover**—A below-average yarn about a man who pursues the girl of his dreams and pays a heavy price.

**Earthquake**—Another "disaster" picture detailing the destruction of Los Angeles. The special effects will scare you, for a while. Otherwise ruined by the klutzing parade of stars, led by (you guessed it!) Charlton Heston. Bad news, all around.

**Endless Love**—Trash. Franco Zeffirelli's unbelievable yarn about a boy who loves a girl so much he does stupid things.

**The Enforcer**—Clint Eastwood's latest installment of Dirty Harry finds the cop a bit more mel-low. Very violent and only slightly more human than previous episodes. A group of guerrillas terrorize San Francisco.

**Escape from Alcatraz**—Clint Eastwood puts us to sleep in a nonacting unexciting escape-from-prison story.

**Every Which Way But Loose**—Many Clint Eastwood pictures have at least a subplot that deserves attention; this one's a washout. A dumb brute and his pet animal.

**Eyes of Laura Mars**—Violent tale of a fashion photographer whose clairvoyant visions anticipate the deaths of her friends. Excessive and repulsive.

**Fire Birds**—Blandly trite story about an Army unit fighting drug lords in Latin America.

**Flashpoint**—Border patrolmen, a fortune in the desert, and a cover-up in Washington. All stewed together in a less than credible mush. Kris Kristofferson and Treat Williams.

**Force 10 from Navarone**—An absolutely dull (was any of the recording live?) "sequel" to *The Guns of Navarone*. Surprise a mission to Yugoslavia.

**For Your Eyes Only**—Even James Bond fans will be disappointed. Only the stunts are interesting in this latest 007 adventure.

**For Keeps**—For sure, save your money. A bland underdeveloped melodrama about teen pregnancy.

**Grandview, U.S.A.**—Sure, all the ingredients are dished up for the formula teenage picture—wrecked cars, small town, teenage crush. And sure it fails.

**The Gauntlet**—Even Clint Eastwood fans will be disappointed in his latest shoot-out between the cops and the mob.

**The Getaway**—A flop. No comparison to the original. Outlaw couple on the run.

**Going Places**—A sadistic French film about two young bullies who destroy whatever crosses their path. Pretends to be naughty when in fact it's both senseless and boring.

**Graystoke, the Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes**—So-so attempt to nail down the legend in proper fashion backfires because a legend nailed down ain't a legend.

**The Greek Tycoon**—A not-so-subtle story paralleling the lives of Jackie Kennedy and Aristotle Onassis. Seems cheap.

**The Groove Tube**—A movie take-off on TV's "Laugh-In," this low-budget labor of frivolity scores about 18 percent of the time. Strictly for nonsensical adults.

**Hard to Kill**—Good cop comes out of seven-year coma and uses karate to bob the mob. Hohum.

**The Hard Way**—A mismatched flow. An actor shadows a famous cop whom he wants to portray.

**History of the World, Part I**—Mel Brooks falls flat. His attempt at a history of the world isn't even funny, just tasteless.

**The Howling**—A rather inventive horror film, all about werewolves. Graphic.

**The Human Factor**—A feast of blood and gore in this story of a man bent on revenge after the assassination of his family.

**An Innocent Man**—A disappointing failure for director Peter Yates. A mistaken address, crooked cops, an unjust jail sentence, revenge, and a drug lord. And self-conscious to boot!

**Internal Affairs**—Richard Gere's acting is as awful as always in this sleazy flick about a sleazy cop.

**Intersection**—Badly-acted backflash of a yarn about an architect who can't commit to his wife or his lover. Film by committee with lousy casting.

**Ishtar**—Embarrassing. A total mess of a mismatch misfire. Two songwriters try to perform on the road and end up in Morocco.

**It's My Turn**—A self-conscious, insulting, incomplete, and unbelievable characterization of a woman who has achieved a lot but wants more. A con job—from the director.

**Judgment Night**—A ho-hum yarn about four drinking buddies who take a shortcut in a rented RV and end up in the inner city ("Oh, no!"). Waste of time.

**King David**—A major disaster and disappointment. Can this be the same director who created the classic *Breaker Morant*? Can this be the grand story of David, Jonathan, Saul, and their women? Richard Gere is awful. Depressing failure.

**King of the Gypsies**—A weak story about a rich culture, the gypsies in America. The patriarch tries to lure his grandson into community leadership.

**Krull**—Two warring clans unite against the invading monster by wedding prince and princess. Really? You bet. Do they get the unpleasant fellow on the faraway planet? Are you kidding!

**Loose Cannons**—An embarrassingly amateur buddy cop picture about a hardboiled pro and rookie with a split personality.

**The Lords of Flatbush**—A cheap attempt to exploit both the youth and nostalgia markets. It merely lacks strong story, good acting, astute directing and editing, and good color. And a reason to exist.

**Lost in America**—Albert Brooks' unbrilliant, unfunny, fully-yuppie, fully-yucky, cross-country meandering meaninglessness. A young couple seeks the meaning of life by losing their money trying to cross America.

**Love and Bullets**—Charles Bronson against the mob. Dull with beautiful European landscapes. Yawn.

**Man Trouble**—A dud. A singer with security problems.

**The Man with Two Brains**—A mildly amusing, mostly boring slapstick tale of a brain surgeon (Steve Martin) who has developed the screwtop method of operating.

**McQ**—Perfectly awful. John Wayne lumbers through this unbelievable non-film. Colleen Dewhurst is good in her bit part, but it's not worth the risk of vomiting at the rest.

**Mobsters**—Several hunks in search of a story. A nothing frame.

**Mommie Dearest**—It'll make you angry with its one-sided diatribe by a child against its parent. Faye Dunaway portrays Joan Crawford as depicted by daughter Christine Crawford. Mommie does everything wrong; daughter is innocent martyr. It is a vicious yet effective statement—but do such parents really exist?

**Monsignor**—A look at financial misdeeds high in the Vatican. Sounds interesting, but Christopher Reeves as Father Flaherty is a disaster. Totally unbelievable. A pity. Could have been a masterpiece, ala Graham Greene.

**My Best Friend's Girl**—Boring portrait of two buddies at a ski resort who fall in love with the same willful girl.

**Nasty Habits**—A very obvious spoof of Watergate, using the religious establishment (Catholic) as the setting. Absolute nonsense.

**Navy Seals**—A special team from the Navy battles terrorists in the Middle East. Ho-hum.

**Nightwing**—Delivers less than it promises. Modern Indian rivalries against a backdrop of ancient Indian myths, this story about blood-hungry bats ends up seeming shallow next to Hitchcock.

**Not Without My Daughter**—A manipulative thriller about an American woman trying to escape from Iran with her daughter. Tone smacks of racism against Arabs.

**Oh God, You Devil**—George Burns should have quit while he was ahead. This time he plays both God and the Devil.

**Orca**—A whale takes revenge on the man who recklessly killed its mate and offspring. Richard Harris and Charlotte Rambling star. Doesn't make it on any score.

**The Passage**—An almost pathetic tale of escape across the Pyrenees from the Nazis. Incredible plotting and characterization. Soup.

**Patty Hearst**—A film which lacks focus and talent, muddling through the true-life story (sorta) of the heiress kidnapped in 1974.

**Pee-Wee's Big Adventure**—Don't try this unless you're primed about Pee-Wee. Even then, the thin plot about an adult-sized baby who has his bike stolen requires patient viewers, willing to be intrigued by unusual visuals and wacko comedy.

**Players**—This self-conscious movie tries to be serious about tennis and playful about love and loses on both scores. Ali MacGraw is embarrassing as the prize.

**Police Academy**—A flop about misfits at a police academy. Funny at spots.

**Porky's**—A bawdy, mindless, adolescent romp of guys and girls in a South Florida high school, eager to learn about sex and full of juvenile pranks.

**Porky's II, The Next Day**—Sequels, sequels. Only worse than the original which was pathetic. Not-so-bright high school students in 1950's Florida.

**Private Lessons**—A rather sordid yarn about a man and a woman posing as a maid and a driver who try to blackmail the teenager of a wealthy family by sexual lure.

**Rabbit Test**—Joan Rivers is no Woody Allen yet. A too-long TV-like yarn about the world's first pregnant man. Mildly amusing.

**Raise the Titanic**—They want the ship for its rare minerals—for defense purposes. But don't put down what you're doing. You can sleep comfortably at home. Slow-paced, undramatic, and boring.

**Rapture**—An unorthodox film about a telephone operator who becomes involved in the sex and drug scene (rather graphic), only to be converted to a Fundamentalist sect. Could have been a gem, but ends up in fragments.

**Red Dawn**—Blatantly manipulative, this fantasy about a Soviet-led invasion of Colorado falls flat. Redblooded American fascism.

**The Revenge of the Pink Panther**—Chief Inspector Clouseau's latest escapades come off empty and humorless. Time for the shelf?

**Ricochet**—A relentless, violent tale of revenge between a district attorney and the killer he sent to prison.

**Rooftops**—A total disappointment. The director of *West Side Story* and *The Sound of Music* tries to make a comeback and fails miserably. This tale of homeless kids who live on rooftops in New York serves up plastic and pink. No reality.

**The Rookie**—Mediocre even by Clint Eastwood standards. A rookie copy comes of age beside might Clint.

**Same Time, Next Year**—An absolutely awful movie (except the last twenty minutes) about a couple who meet once a year for a weekend fling. Attempts to sketch the times we all lived through. Ends up as so much dried mush.

**Scenes from a Mall**—An appallingly boring yarn about a husband and wife unburdening their souls on a trip to the mall.

**Semi-Tough**—Couldn't be more disappointing. Burt Reynolds and Kris Kristofferson in a senseless mix of football and consciousness gimmicks.



**Shattered**—Another accident-leading-to-a-loss-of-memory yarn. The man forgetting involves a private eye to help him remember.

**Simon**—Really misfires. A group of scientists try to convince Alan Arkin that he was born on another planet, and he tries to convince the world that he's their hero. Silly and shrill.

**Sky Bandits**—A happy-go-lucky adventure yarn of two World War I bankrobbers-turned-pilots.

**Sniper**—A cocky Marine and his inexperienced partner on a dangerous mission in the jungle. So-so.

**Soapdish**—Loud, unfunny parody of soap operas. You had to be there, I guess.

**Star Trek II/The Wrath of Khan**—The first movie in this re-run series was so bad that anything looks better. But it's still hardly a movie. Boring yarn about Captain Kirk and his talky crew.

**Stick**—Why can't Burt Reynolds settle down and do a serious film? He tries, oh, how he tries, but it's trashy nonetheless. An ex-con and the Mob.

**A Stranger Among Us**—A disappointing mystery set in Brooklyn's Hasidic Jewish community. Miscast, mis-everything.

**Superman III**—Even Richard Pryor can't save this sequel. Superman undergoes analysis, there is no tension, and the outcome is never in doubt. Boring deluxe.

**Tai-pan**—A clinker of an epic. James Clavell's very boring story about the founding of Hong Kong.

**Terminal Velocity**—A skydiver gets tricked into espionage. Mainly hard to believe.

**Threesome**—A superficial look at sexuality among three college students who live together. Pretentious and shallow.

**Tombstone**—A clumsy attempt to revise (politically correctly, of course) the gunfight at the OK Corral. Long and flat.

**Tron**—Another science fiction piece, this one featuring a computer operator who is kidnapped and swallowed by the computer. Dazzling by spots, imaginative, but storyless. The computer kidnapped the drama, too!

**True Love**—The final days before the big Italian wedding are filled with doubts, arguments, and tears. Lacks feeling.

**Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me**—Not for average moviegoers. Director David Lynch yields a diabolical lens on life. Quirky and malevolent.

**Undercover Blues**—A miserable failure about two spies in New Orleans. Lacks soul and structure.

**Used People**—Disappointing yarn about an old man who has loved a woman from afar for many years, and brings himself to declare it to her on the day of her husband's funeral.

**A View to a Kill**—James Bond, old and tired, stumbles through this latest disorganization. Time to turn the lights out?

**Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe?**—George Segal and Jacqueline Bisset in a disappointing yarn about food, chefs, and murder.

**Airport 1975**—An absolutely boring, silly sequel to *Airport*; about as exciting as watching Charlton Heston fail an acting tryout. A studio executive's dream of assembly-line junk.

**An American Werewolf in London**—Forget it. An American boy in England gets bitten—you know the rest.

**The Awakening**—A hard-to-believe, best-to-avoid horror story involving reincarnation of an ancient Egyptian princess.

**Beverly Hills Cops**—The original was witty; this rip-off is a silly cartoon.

**Brainscan**—A brain-dead science fiction horror film about simulating death. A waste.

**The Cannonball Run**—Truly unworthwhile. A cross-country auto race on a ton of stupid silly flat jokes.

**Cheech & Chong's Nice Dreams**—A very slow, very dull yarn about two hip drug-pushers who lay back and play cool.

**The Crush**—An uninspired yarn about a teenage girl obsessed with an older man.

**Dead and Buried**—Exactly. This limp horror tale should be dead and buried. Unbelievable plot about living dead.

**Death on the Nile**—Avoid it. No point in paying money to sleep. It's that boring, in spite of an "all-star" cast and Agatha Christie's ideas. Deadly.

**Demolition Man**—Futuristic yarn with dim-witted violence, set in L.A. circa 2032.

**Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry**—A waste and a con (on the ticket buyer). Peter Fonda remains a desert of talent in this obvious rip-off designed as an "auto" version of *Easy Rider*. There's nothing more disgusting than pseudo-seriousness dumped on the public. Susan George has talent, but then what good is that?

**The Eagle Has Landed**—An absolutely boring waste of time, energy, and talent. Lacks characterization, action, and subtlety. Michael Caine, Robert Duvall, and Donald Sutherland stumble.

**The Eiger Sanction**—A nothing story built around Clint Eastwood's straight face (one wonders how many more such nothing plots and characters can be made as a vehicle for Eastwood). Everything is so predictable, hokey, and belabored, one should be paid, rather than pay, to endure this disaster.

**Evil Under the Sun**—Forget it. Contrived, slow, and uninteresting. Based on an Agatha Christie whodunit on an elegant island.

**Extreme Prejudice**—A sorry, sick, bloody would-be Western about annihilating a drug dealer in Mexico. Hopelessly excessive.

**Folks!**—A totally awful story about a successful yuppie and his aging parents.

**Her Alibi**—How the director who brought us a classic like *Breaker Morant* could stumble so badly requires a herculean alibi! Terrible, out-of-sync drivel about a writer and a murder suspect.

**The Hidden**—Truly awful. An alien being inhabits the bodies of several humans and even a dog. A dog inhabits this film.

**High Risk**—A B-grade attempt to steal a load of money south of the border.

**Hot Shots**—A boring parody of fighter-pilot movies.

**The Island**—Boring, weird, and gruesome tale of a man and his son who are captured and tormented by pirates.

**Jaws 2**—Just when you thought that sequels were safe again, an utterly amateurish disaster mush comes to the screen. A tasteless home movie about some more sharks.

**The Jewel of the Nile**—Hardly a gem. Mindless adventure in the Middle East.

**Kentucky Fried Movie**—Tries all the gags TV won't permit on "Laugh-In," but flops miserably. Is neither funny nor satirical. A pinch of humor in two tons of tastelessness.

**Kickboxer**—Avoid it. Amateur, laughable yarn about martial arts and getting even.

**Love Crimes**—Another grimy yarn about a beautiful D.A. making her mark by tracking down a strange rapist.

**Loverboy**—Sleazy exploitation fare about a pizza delivery boy who sells his sexual favors to wealthy female customers.

**Major League II**—Embarrassing sequel about insane baseball players. Wouldn't qualify for the

cellar of the farm league.

**Mandingo**—A ruthlessly violent picture about the American South in earlier days. Passion becomes beastly and unnecessarily brutal. Avoid it.

**The Missionary**—An Angelican missionary sets up a home for prostitutes in Edwardian London. Flip, slapstick, and unsatisfactory.

**Montenegro**—A sad, sadistic, dreamy, pseudo-political rip-off. An American-born wife leaves her very rich Swedish husband and experiments with two Yugoslavian derelicts in the slums of Stockholm. Gets worse.

**My Father, the Hero**—A totally stupid yarn about a father who'll do anything to please his alienated teenage daughter.

**Night Game**—An embarrassingly out-of-sync flick. A cop hunts down a serial killer.

**Octagon**—A martial arts story of good and evil which isn't worth the time.

**Our Time**—Save your money. This pre-pill nostalgic rip-off deserves to be shelved. Preachy and schmaltzy in a sickening way.

**Rambo! First Blood, Part II**—A melodramatic rip-off of Vietnam disappointments. Stallone should be ashamed.

**Raw**—Whoa! This is a waste of near-genius talent. Eddie Murphy rages with a raw mouth through all his self-importance and all of his prejudices. Really disappointing. Totally raw; barely funny.

**Red Heat**—Arnold Schwarzenegger. Need one say more? O.K.—how about destroying half of Chicago with enough noise to leave the planet deaf.

**Red Sonja**—Not only stupid, but totally unprofessional. Embarrassing sword-and-sorcery yarn.

**Return to Macon County**—An empty nothing. A meaningless road picture which goes nowhere.

**Scaramouche**—A number one rip-off with an advertising campaign meant to entice lovers of *The Four Musketeers*. Only swordfight fanatics could bear it.

**Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills**—Awful. Silly drivel about servants seducing their employers.

**The Seduction**—Plastic and awful. A television anchorwoman is pursued by a psychotic photographer. Embarrassingly self-conscious.



**The Shadow**—One of the worst films in years. Crime fighter pursues villain with girl at his side.

**Shanghai Surprise**—A hopeless flop. An uptight missionary in the '30s who tries to track down opium in China.

**Sliver**—An exploitation thriller about a beautiful high-rise tenant under surveillance. Cheap.

**Sirens**—Forget it. Bohemian 101 does not make a movie. No story. Only superficial facade. the church tries to censure an artist.

**The Specialist**—Manipulative exploitation vehicle. No concept of story. A dud.

**Street People**—Roger Moore and Stacy Keach in another Mafia romp which becomes boring in its triteness.

**Survive**—No adjective can describe the disappointment of this Mexican-made quickie take-off on the Andes tragedy rushed out to beat *Alive*. Avoid it.

**Surviving the Game**—A brutal yarn about a sadistic club of hunters who trick human losers to be their prey in the wilderness.

**Tango and Cash**—B-grade buddy cops in L.A. in D-grade flick.

**Thank God It's Friday**—A cheap disco film that slurps around, going nowhere. So pitiful beside *Saturday Night Fever* that it's embarrassing.

**Three Tough Guys**—A pathetic exploitation picture. Avoid it. Tries to mix the black film with violence and crime.

**Up in Smoke**—An absolutely sloppy, unfunny comedy about drugs, featuring Cheech and Chong.

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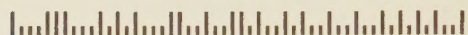
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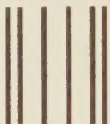
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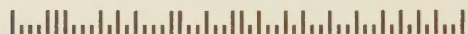
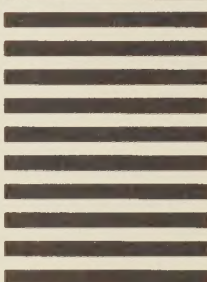
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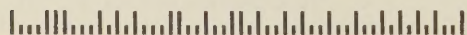
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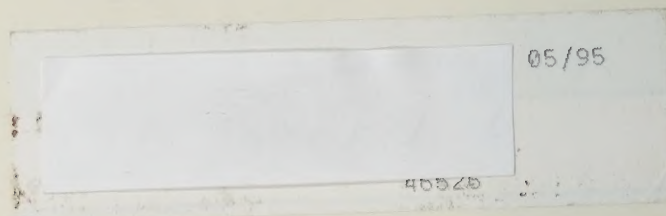
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